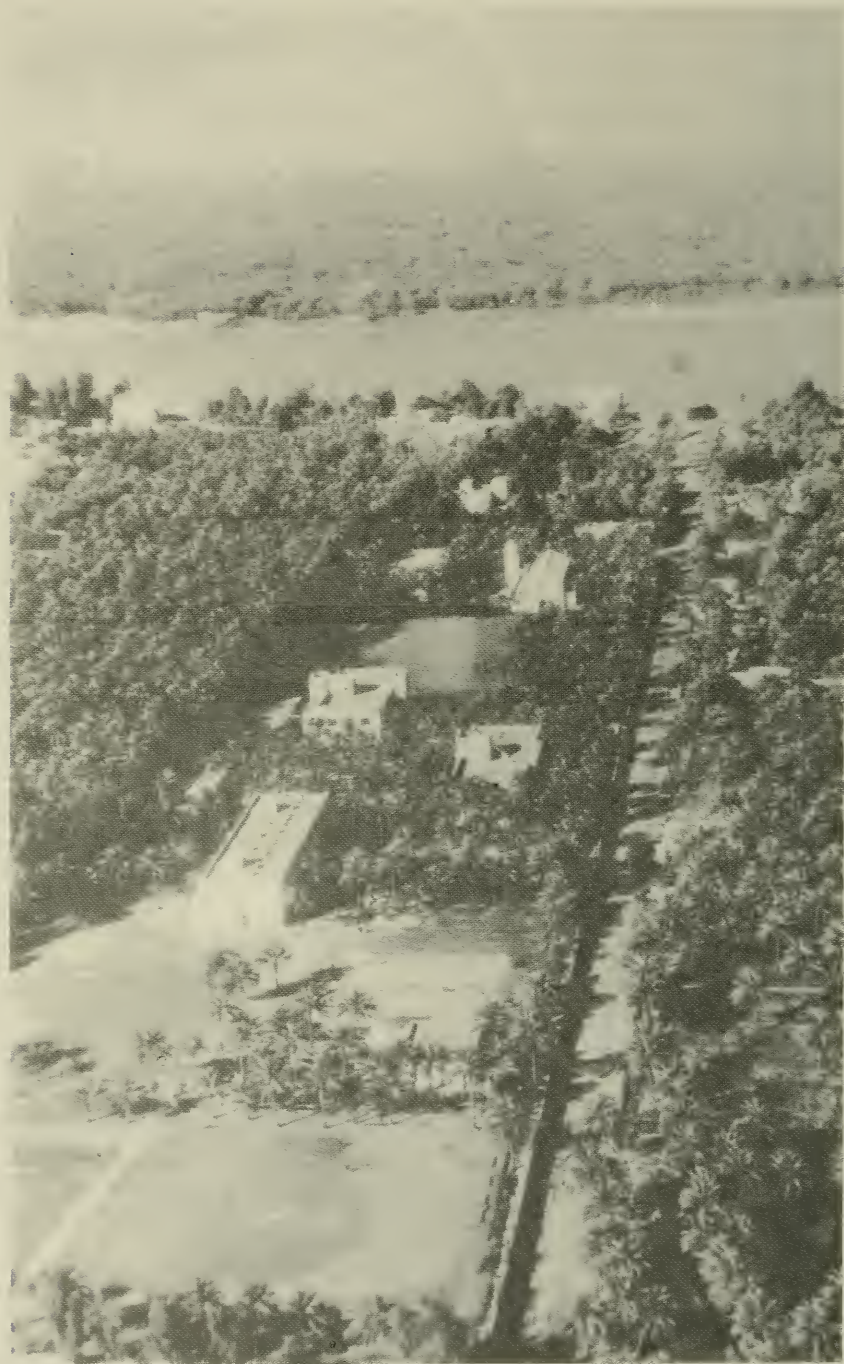


# Jesuits by the Tigris

Men for Others  
in  
Baghdad



by  
Joseph F. MacDonnell, S.J.



**The 25-acre Baghdad College property  
purchased by the Jesuits in 1934.**

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in  
Baghdad



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Joseph F. MacDonnell, S.J.

Jesuit Mission Press  
Boston

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*This book is dedicated  
to the long-suffering and noble people of Iraq  
who have endured wars that they did not seek  
deprivations that they did not expect  
and sorrow that they did not deserve.  
May God deliver them from their suffering.*



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## Preface



Why do hundreds of middle aged Iraqis spend long weekends every two years with post middle age American Jesuits in order to celebrate two schools from which Jesuits were dismissed 25 years ago? Why have two and a half decades not dimmed memories of activities and routines of everyday school life? Why has the hostility between Iraq and the United States not weakened the bonds of friendship between these Iraqi students and their American teachers - not even frayed them? First time visitors to these reunions find the excitement, the enjoyment and the camaraderie of both parties beyond belief. This book is an attempt to explain this latter phenomenon as well as to respond to an alumni request for a record of the Jesuit Baghdad adventure which they can pass on to their children.

During the past 25 years it has often been proposed that someone record and celebrate this very Ignatian enterprise where men of faith, armed with little more than trust in God, overcame great obstacles to build a successful and joyous sign of faith and dedication, and one of the great works of the New England Jesuit Province. Alumni wanted some means to explain to their children the extraordinarily close bond between alumni and Jesuits.

At these gatherings they discuss how they can pass on to their own children the system of values they have received. They appreciate the fact that the quality of their lives has been enriched. Their compassion for others has deepened and they value the spiritual dimension of life. A major concern of these men and women, who are now American citizens, is how to serve others.

My plan has been to document the extraordinary successes of the Jesuits and their Iraqi colleagues as they introduced to the Baghdad community a variety of intellectual, spiritual and social benefits. My story treats neither of church politics nor of secular politics partly because I have neither expertise nor interest in either: it was none of our concern. The Jesuits deliberately avoided such involvement from the beginning because it would interfere with their commitment to education. It is curious that none of the numerous books recently published on Iraq mention the two Jesuit schools in spite of their many prominent graduates. Among other things it certainly demonstrates that the Jesuits were considered neither political nor even politically relevant.

The Jesuits, themselves, were sensitive to the needs of the Iraqi churches and offered a great deal of pastoral assistance outside of their classrooms. Their primary reason for being



educators in Iraq was to help rejuvenate the native church. The Jesuits intended to strengthen the Christians in the practice of their faith in a Muslim world; they welcomed Muslim students also - it would have been unthinkable not to. In this educational setting these Christians and Muslims got to know one another intimately. In this context also the Christians developed a patriotism and pride in a society of which they were a part.

My sources include letters and documents from the New England Jesuit archives {file #510} at Campion Center in Weston, Mass. as well as the memories of Jesuits and alumni who have generously sent me their evaluations and recollections. After introducing Baghdadis and Jesuits, this story divides naturally into three periods punctuated by four events;

- the arrival of the Jesuits in 1932,
- the start of World War II in 1941,
- the start of the Republic in 1958 and
- the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1969.

Then follows a description of the many Baghdad College programs, the Al-Hikma story, some of the interesting characters of both schools, the expulsion and finally a splendid and proud heritage, our alumni.

Of enormous help in this enterprise was Ramzi Hermiz who often read and reread my manuscript and offered countless insightful suggestions. He was the Baghdad College valedictorian in 1948 and completed his education on academic scholarships at both Yale and Princeton. He advanced in engineering with many inventions and patents to executive positions. In a similar way Fr. Ryan from his perspective as a teacher at Baghdad College and former dean of Al-Hikma offered many very valuable corrections and detailed suggestions. Fr. Donohue, the Superior of the Jesuits who was at the center of the storm during the expulsion and is still involved in scholarly work in the Middle East, offered sage advice, precise details as well as valuable data which the archives lacked. It would be impossible to find a more observant, efficient, prompt and cheerful proof-reader than Joan Hanlon. Also contributing their encouragement and support were: Dave Nona, Premjit Talwar, Tahir Bazirgan and Waiel Hindo. Invaluable also was the technical advice of Walter Kempski and also the president of NU-AD, Louis J. Stephen, brother of Najib Yusuf Stephan who belonged to that elite group of 107 young men who entered Baghdad College in its very first class in 1932.

Joseph F. MacDonnell, S.J.  
Fairfield University  
4 May, 1994





## Introduction



"If you have not seen Baghdad, you have not seen the world," So runs a sentence from Medieval Arabic literature, underlining the splendor and opulence that was Baghdad's. City of Caliphs and Turkish mercenaries; center of learning and locus of intrigue, Baghdad still maintains a charm distinct among oriental cities. For 37 years the city fascinated and held a group of New England Jesuits who came, not to see the world nor to imbibe the mysteries of the East, but to aid in the education of Iraqi youth. The Jesuits came suddenly in 1932 at the request of the Chaldean Patriarch and they left as suddenly in September 1969 when the Iraqi Government found them no longer desirable. But they left behind them their modest monument - a secondary school, a university, some thousands of graduates, a handful of Iraqi Jesuits and a wealth of good will and love. To be uprooted so quickly and curtly without explanation or excuse is not easy. Several of the sixty Jesuits expelled in 1968-1969 had spent over 20 years in Baghdad and had thought of nothing save living, working and dying in Baghdad. By simple decree those plans were voided.

Many years ago, back in 1932, a handful of American Jesuits sailed the seas to Beirut and bused across the desert to Baghdad. They came to Baghdad in answer to this request from the Patriarch of the Chaldeans and the other bishops of Baghdad who wanted a secondary school for their Christian boys. At first Baghdad was a strange city for the Jesuits. The language, the dress, the customs created that aura of mystery which surrounds the cities of the East. The covered bazaar, crowded and dimly lit, with its brocades and spices and peculiar smells was in sharp contrast to the broad pavements and glassed store fronts they had known. But they settled in and got down to work. Before long they became familiar to the silent scrutiny of the Baghdadis. Baghdad College and its robed faculty became part of the landscape of Baghdad. Faculty and students increased and Baghdad College sired a University, Al-Hikma. Five Jesuits lived and died in Baghdad and were buried under the date palms. Five Iraqi boys became Jesuits and all seemed well. Then came the shock and horror of war breeding humiliation and hatred. That war of 1967 which was supposed to solve the problems of the area only increased them and spawned new ones. The world took sides after so many years of wordy neutrality, and the Jesuit College and University which had seemed to blend into the surroundings so well, now became a foreign element in the eyes of some Iraqis. The years of devotion, service and proven sympathy could not negate the origins of the Jesuits.





And so the Jesuits were sent off as quietly as they had come.

The operation started like so many other Jesuit overseas enterprises: a few men rich in interest, devotion and hope but poor in finances set out to do what they could to help the church in Iraq, convinced that the generosity of American Catholics would provide. Fr. Edward Madaras acquired a second-hand mimeograph machine before setting sail for the East and started publishing *Al-Baghdadi* - while still on the high seas. The interest created by the *Al-Baghdadi*, a very popular periodical chronicled by Fr. Madaras, and the continual work of the Jesuit Mission Office in Boston provided the funds to start and continue Baghdad College.

From a beginning of 107 students and 9 faculty (4 Jesuits and 5 Iraqis) Baghdad College grew to an enrollment of over 1,000 students with a faculty of thirty-three Jesuits and thirty-one Iraqi laymen. The growth was not easy and painless. The centuries of antagonism between Islam and Christianity and the long hostility between East and West had left scars on the Iraqis. They were justifiably suspicious of these Western priests. Iraq whose population is 95% Muslim was struggling to gain its footing in the modern world. In 1932 the League of Nations had recognized the independence of Iraq, but the problems of developing its resources and creating modern institutions weighed heavily on Iraqi administrators. Although some Iraqis were a bit suspicious, all Iraqis were enormously hospitable and tolerant. If one had patience he could prove himself.

Quietly the Jesuits went about their business of educating Christian Iraqi boys and the Muslims who were interested in coming. There was never any attempt to convert Muslims - that was not the purpose of the Jesuits coming to Baghdad. Slowly this became apparent to the Baghdadis and dissipated their fears and suspicions. There was a low period early in World War II when alienation from the Allied Powers and nascent nationalism made the future of Baghdad College look very bleak, but the impending threat turned into an impetus for growth when some key Muslims in the Ministry of Education reevaluated their judgment about Baghdad College and the Jesuits and brought their sons to enroll at the College. The enrollment increased steadily and the donations of anonymous benefactors and thousands of friends of Jesuits enabled the school plant to keep pace with the added numbers of students.

From the early days Baghdad College followed the program prescribed for secondary schools by the Iraq Government. There was no desire on the part of the Jesuits to transfer American programs of study to Iraq. In the framework of the Iraqi program the Jesuits offered their students a distinct advantage - bilingualism in Arabic and English. The students studied science





and mathematics in English and in Arabic. Thus they were prepared to take the final government exams in Arabic and also to pursue further scientific study in Baghdad University through the medium of English. Also several were judged competent by the government to study abroad in the U.S.A. and Great Britain.

From evidence available and from the response of Baghdad University Professors the Jesuits judged that they were making a substantial contribution to education in Iraq during a crucial period in its development. Several graduates went into medicine and engineering - the two most critical and needed professions in the developing world. Very few went into politics. The Jesuits never considered themselves purveyors of political ideology and deliberately refrained from entering into the complexities of Iraqi politics and from currying favor of any political faction. This neutral stance was an asset for 37 years.

The Jesuits on request had made various attempts to aid primary schools, but all came to naught. Their main effort remained concentrated on secondary education until the early 50's when requests from interested people pushed the Jesuits to study the possibility of opening a university in Baghdad. An affirmative decision was made and with government approval and encouragement, Al-Hikma University was begun in September 1956 with offerings in engineering and business administration. Later an arts college was added when the university went co-educational. In the 12 years of its existence Al-Hikma University grew to an enrollment of 700 students and established a favorable reputation. In the Fall of 1968 there were 25 Jesuits and 53 laymen on the faculty.

Such is the skeleton history of the Jesuits in Baghdad. They were not missionaries in the classical sense of the term. They preached rarely and they proselytized not at all. They faced no threat of natives on the war path and none could console themselves by counting their converts. Baghdad was referred to by some as a fruitless waste of men and money; others called it a mission of faith to underline the lack of concrete consolations and accomplishments. But these were the judgments of "outsiders," people who had not experienced the myriad fascinations of Baghdad and Baghdadis. They had no knowledge of the impact Jesuits made on students as well as their families, Muslim as well as Christian.

In addition to the impact on their charges, Jesuits also impacted Baghdad society. The opportunities provided to make contributions in education were many and the response of the Jesuits was praiseworthy. The development of an English program especially geared to Arabic speaking students was one instance; a course in religion tailored to Iraqi Christians was another. And





the case of Fr. Guay who turned a side interest in architecture to a full-time occupation is the most fascinating of all. He designed and executed most all of the buildings. The two Jesuit campuses - low cost, functional architecture reflecting the periods of Iraqi history from Babylon up through the Muslim period. The Jesuit impact certainly went beyond the walls of the two schools.

It is hard for a foreigner to blend fully into a different culture but the attempt was made and was appreciated. Fr. Richard McCarthy became one of the well-known Arabic preachers in the Christian community and established a reputation for his education in Muslim theology among the learned men in Iraq.

Even apart from these singular examples there was a general satisfaction among all the Jesuits from the work they were engaged in, from the rapport with both Muslims and Christians, from the many little helps they were able to offer to so many, and from the experience of learning from a very different culture. Perhaps it can all be summed up by the fact that the Iraqis are a happy, hospitable and unsophisticated people, frank, warm and forthright in expressing appreciation as well as disapproval.

Working in Baghdad did not require some fierce determination rooted in totally supernatural motives. It was enjoyable to work in Baghdad. But there were problems, springing mostly from the limits which come from being a foreigner. The Jesuits could serve the Christian poor, but the Muslim poor were beyond their reach. The Jesuits tried to foster social responsibility but had to beware of entering into the area of politics.

From the beginning there was strong hope that before too many years there would be Iraqi boys in training to be Jesuits. They would complete the process begun and the Society of Jesus would become an integral part of the Iraqi scene. Vocations were numerous, but only a few had the stamina and persistence to overcome parental opposition and social pressures to follow through on their original desire.

Also the desire to help the Church directly become a reality when the Jesuits assumed responsibility for the Chaldean Minor Seminary in 1964. The Jesuits could complement the work of training priests done for nearly a century by the French Dominicans. At the same time Jesuits were becoming involved in the direction and training of Iraqi Sisters. These new ramifications and work with Iraqi Christian youth which had been going on for some time in conjunction with the Carmelites seemed to auger well for the future of the Church and for Muslim-Christian relations.

The Jesuits had overcome in part their foreign origin and had identified with the church in Iraq and with the Iraqi educational



system. But there was always the awareness that at anytime the Jesuits might be asked to leave. They were guests of the Iraqi Government. Each year they had to renew their permits for residence in Iraq, and every wave of anti-American feeling which blew across the Middle East was a threat to their continued existence.

The revolution of 1958 and each succeeding revolution was a crisis of sorts. Each succeeding government studied the question of "foreign" schools; each time Baghdad College and Al-Hikma University were judged beneficial to the country and their work went on - until the traumatic crisis of June 1967 when the Israelis took over Arab territory and displaced more Palestinian refugees. The wave of anti-American feeling reached new intensity because of the United States stance in the area and it became clear that the continued presence of American Jesuits was more tenuous than ever. For a time it seemed that the Jesuits would weather this crisis as they had others in the past. School and work went on for another year until a new revolution brought to power a socialist government more interested in controlling all private education. The government decreed that it would administer Al-Hikma while the Jesuits continued to teach. The Jesuits accepted the proposal and attempted to work in the new framework for a few months until an extremist element in the government decreed their expulsion from Iraq in November 1968. A year later the American Jesuits at Baghdad College were ordered to leave by the same group.

The expulsion was a disappointment and a shock of sorts, but it was not unexpected, it was always a possibility during each of the 37 years the Jesuits worked in Iraq. All things are passing and the usefulness of the American Jesuit contribution to Iraq was nearing its end. It is difficult for a foreigner to play an active role in the process of politicization and nationalization now gripping so many of the developing countries. Without regretting the past or prejudging the future, the Jesuits think the time has come for new forms and different accents.

Reflecting on their work over the past 37 years, the Jesuits feel it was all very worthwhile and they are grateful to the many benefactors who made that work possible. It was an investment of men and money in the process of human development. The yield has been great if one measures results, not in financial terms, but in terms of human growth and love and understanding.

**John J. Donohue, S.J.**

CEMAM (Center for the Study of the Modern Arab World)

4 May, 1994:

St. Joseph's University in Beirut









## Chapter 1

# Civilization's Infancy in Mesopotamia



*The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, to the East;  
... the tree of life also in the midst of the garden,  
and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.  
Genesis 2:8-9*

## Early Mesopotamian cultures B.C.

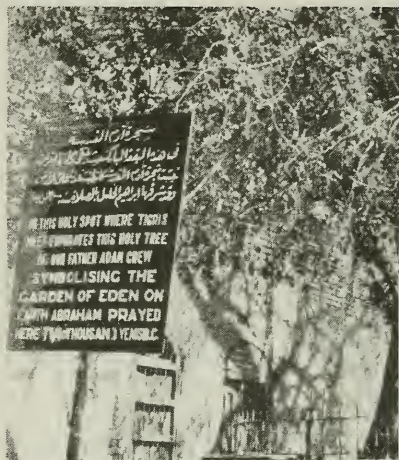
Iraq has a history that fascinates anyone even slightly interested in the civilized world, since civilization was born in the city-states of Mesopotamia 6,000 years ago. To adapt one of Ben Johnson's sayings: "To be tired of Iraq is to be tired of life". Here one finds the first traces of agriculture and the trading that ensued, the beginnings of organized religion, the development of mathematical methods, the flowering of the arts and architecture. Here is found the first form of writing and the beginnings of literature (including the first story of creation and the flood) which made possible the pursuit of knowledge and economic order within an organized government. Later civilizations were all influenced by Mesopotamia.

### The cradle of civilization

It was Mesopotamia, the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers, that hosted the legendary Garden of Eden - if it existed anywhere. To emphasize this the ancient village of Al-Qurna singled out a tree ("Adam's tree") with a sign - in Arabic and English.

On this holy spot where the Tigris meets the Euphrates this holy tree of our father Adam grew symbolizing the Garden of Eden. Abraham prayed here 2,000 years B.C.

Throughout Iraq loom ziggurat temples dating from 3,000 B.C. which recall the story of the Tower of Babel. One such ziggurat is Aqar-Quf (a suburb of present day Baghdad) marking the capital of the Cassites. In the south lie the ruins of Sumer where were found tens of thousands of stone tablets from the incredible Sumerian culture which flourished 5,000 years ago.



*"The holy tree"*

On some of these tablets, which were used for teaching children, are found fascinating descriptions of everyday life, including the first organized and detailed set of instructions on when to plant and when to harvest. Also in the south lie the ruins of Ur from which at God's prodding Abraham set out for the promised land. Here the Akkadians introduced chariots to warfare. Nearby on the west bank of the Shatt-el-Arab lies Basra which later became the home port of Sindbad the Sailor. The Marsh Arabs (Ma'dan) are found at the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates in the south.

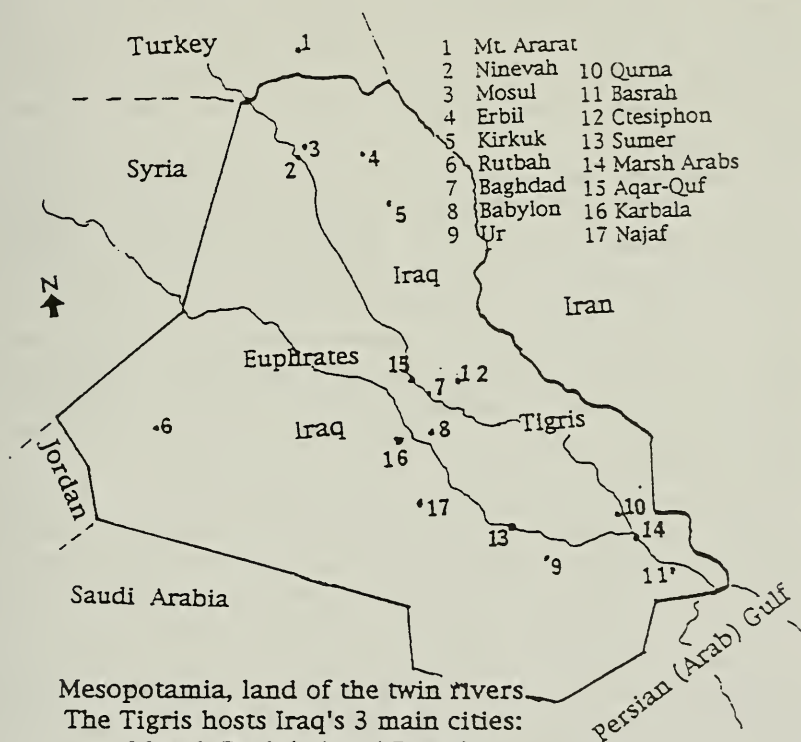
In the north of Iraq the gates of Ninevah (Ney-na-wah), the Assyrian capital with their imaginative stone winged-bulls mark the place where the prophet Jonah is said to have preached penance to the wicked inhabitants, all of whom repented, much to Jonah's chagrin. Later neighboring Mosul became the crossroads of the great caravan routes. Kirkuk is the oil center of the north and boasts of the tomb of the Old Testament prophet Daniel. The city of Mosul has given us the cloth that bears its name "muslin" as well as building materials, alabaster and gypsum cement with its remarkable strength and rapid-drying properties.

In the middle of Iraq lie the ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's Hanging Gardens of Babylon (Babel) close to the place where Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego sang their hymn of praise in the midst of the fiery furnace. Here Daniel read the mysterious Aramaic handwriting on the wall "mene tekel peres" (counted, weighed, divided) in the Aramaic or Chaldean language for Nebuchadnezzar and under the later rule of Darius, the biblical Daniel sat



unharmd in the lions' den. The Old Testament "Daniel" story, probably written between 167-164 B.C., was borrowed from Babel and Persian literature and adapted for Jewish readership.

Judaism had been a presence in Mesopotamia since the Babylonian captivity from 586 to 538 B.C. Nearby, Xenophon and his 10,000 fought against the Persians and in 1700 B.C. Hammurabi composed his famous collection of laws. After conquering the world, Alexander the Great, at the age of 32 died an untimely death at Babel in 323 B.C. The Sassanid settlement of Selucia-Ctesiphon (Ma-da-in) boasted of a giant arch (the only remnant of the palace still standing) which was believed to have been the widest span of pure brickwork in the world. The Arch of Ctesiphon (Taq-ki-sra near Baghdad) testifies to the skill of its third century builders.



Mesopotamia, land of the twin rivers.  
The Tigris hosts Iraq's 3 main cities:  
Mosul, Baghdad and Basrah

## Early science

In *History Begins at Sumer*, Kramer tells of the third millennium B.C. Sumerian astronomers living along the Tigris River who noticed that there were roughly 360 days in the year. The missing five days were declared occasional holidays. This

number 360 was very convenient since it was divisible by many smaller numbers, so they divided each day into 360 *gesh*, which were later changed by the Babylonians to 24 hours with two levels of subdivisions. Present day use of *minute* and *second* is traced to the Latin translations of the Babylonian designations for these subdivisions: small bits (*minuta* -> minutes) and secondary small bits (*secunda minuta* -> seconds).

Around 2400 B.C. the Sumerians developed an ingenious sexagesimal system to represent all integers from 1 to 59 using 59 different patterns of wedges (cunei . . . cuneiform) which were usually imprinted in soft clay and later hardened. Integers from 60 to 3600 were then represented by a different symbol for 60 which was combined with the other 59 patterns. Like our decimal system it was positional so that the successive symbols were assumed to be multiplied by decreasing powers of 60. For instance, the number 365 in the decimal system would, in the sexagesimal system, be written 6 5 (= 6 times 60 + 5 times 1), just as 65 in our decimal system of base ten means 6 times 10 plus 5 times 1.

An adventuresome, determined and curious reader with a calculator can verify that the Babylonian number 4 23 36 (equals {4 times 60 times 60} + {23 times 60} + {36 times 1}) represents 15,816 in our decimal system. In their grasp of the workings of arithmetic the Babylonians were far superior to the Greeks of later centuries. The latter used letters for numbers (so 888 would be  $\omega\pi\eta$ ) and they would have trouble multiplying a simple problem like 12 times 28 which would be  $\iota\beta$  times  $\kappa\eta$ . The multiplication rules for letters were beyond the reach of an ordinary person.

Kramer uses as his main source the content of tens of thousands of Sumerian tablets, uncovered in this century from 1902 on, which date back to 2,400 B.C. and reveal a rich literature long before Greek civilization. These remarkable tablets gave us the first *Farmer's Almanac* filled with astronomical and mathematical data, proving that Sumerian schoolboys were learning the Pythagorean theorem 1,800 years before Pythagoras (circa 585-500 B.C.) was born. In this mainstream of our own cultural background, the Mesopotamian civilization, a fortuitous event in the evolution of arithmetic symbols occurred through the adoption of Sumerian "cuneiform" symbols by the Akkadians to represent their semitic language as it became more popular in Mesopotamia.





## Later Mesopotamian cultures A.D.

### Christian presence since the first century

Iraq's Christian community dates back to Apostolic times. In *The Nestorians and Their Muslim Neighbors* (p. 24), John Joseph relates the traditions claiming that the Apostles, Jude Thaddeus, Bartholomew and Simon first planted the Christian faith in the north of Iraq. Also he notes the belief that St. Thomas stopped in Mesopotamia on his way to India. In the third century the Nestorian and Jacobite Christians became the most important advisors to the rulers of Mesopotamia. Their influence and ability to spread Christianity lasted for centuries.

The dominant rite now is that of the Chaldean Catholics. Others represented to a lesser degree are: Jacobites, Syrian Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic (Melkite), Nestorians and Latin Catholic. The totality of Christians constitutes a small minority of less than 5% of Iraqis. The multiplicity of rites, however, in this small minority has led to friction, jealousies, and disputes which have prevented the Christian presence from being an effective Christian witness. After Vatican II, however, there has been a marked growth of the ecumenical spirit.

Three major seminaries were founded in Iraq during this century. One is at Dora just south of Baghdad and two are in Mosul, St. Peter's for the Chaldeans conducted by Chaldean priests and St. John's Syrian Seminary conducted by French Dominicans who also run a high school in Mosul. The Chaldean Sisters are the Daughters of the Immaculate Conception who had a number of schools for girls. In the first part of this century native Dominican Sisters ran 10 schools with 2,500 students. Chaldean Antonian monks in the monastery of St. Hormiz near Alqosh and the Carmelite Fathers do parochial work.

In the early days of the Society of Jesus while St. Ignatius was still alive, Jesuits passed through Baghdad on their way to the China mission. Recorded in the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu* are the travels of Jesuits Gaspar Barzée and Raymond Pereira sometime between 1549 and 1567 and later Nicolas Trigault between 1612 and 1614. During the 17th century several dozen Jesuits made such a journey including one of the greatest Jesuit missionaries, Alexander de Rhodes, who labored in Indochina and who eventually was buried in Ispahan, Iran. Jesuit Brothers Bernard Sales and George Berthe died in Baghdad in 1661 and 1664. During this century the time had come for the Jesuits to return to Baghdad.



## Islamic civilization

In the seventh century came the Muslim Conquest and the Baghdad Caliphs had more to offer than Sindbad, Scheherazade with her 1,001 stories, Aladdin and his wonderful lamp, Ali Baba and the forty thieves. The city of Baghdad became a center of Muslim power, the capital of the Abbasid Empire for five centuries (750-1258 A.D.), and the center of a flourishing Arab culture. In 1232 A.D. the Caliph Al-Mustansir founded, in the middle of Baghdad, Al Mustanserria, one of the earliest universities. However, later in the 13th century Baghdad was plundered by the Mongols and stagnated for centuries.

Baghdad then endured four centuries of Ottoman domination and mismanagement which ended with the British occupation following World War I. After this long ordeal Baghdad grew steadily into a modern city, especially after World War II. Among the significant events which shaped modern Iraq were the discovery of oil, the establishment of the Hashemite Monarchy, the overthrow of this same Hashemite monarchy and the establishment of the Republic in 1958.

The majority of Iraqis are Arabs. There is a large minority of Kurds and a lesser percentage of Turks, Iranians, Chaldeans, Assyrians and Armenians. According to the 1965 census about 95 percent of the eight million (in 1990 eighteen million) inhabitants were Muslims. The Muslims of Iraq are divided into Sunnites and Shiites, with the latter forming the majority. Southwest of Baghdad lies Najaf and the city of Karbala which is the shrine of the imam El-Hussein ibn Ali and an important pilgrimage site for Shiites.

About the middle of the ninth century Bait Al-Hikma, the "House of Wisdom" was founded in Baghdad which combined the functions of a library, academy, and translation bureau. A very conspicuous creative work of the Arabs lies in mathematics and astronomy. Arab astronomers have left quite a discernible impact on maps of the heavens and given us such words as *azimuth*, *nadir*, and *zenith*. Our mathematical vocabulary includes such borrowed terms as *algebra*, *algorithm* (from al-Khwarizmi), *cipher*, *surd*, and *sine*.

The "House of Wisdom" turned toward the ancient Babylonians in order to return to primary sources instead of relying on Greek translations. It continued for several centuries and eventually took in boarding students from Europe and all over the known world. Bait Al-Hikma flourished long before Paris, Salamanca, Bologna, Prague, or Oxford.



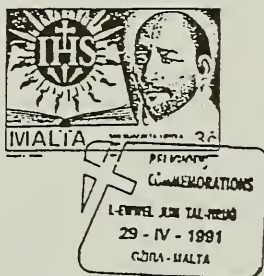
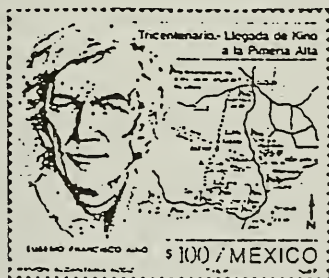
## The Jesuit educational commitment

On many Jesuit campuses in the world one will find buildings with the same unpronounceable names of Jesuit scholars and saints. It takes little effort for a student of culture and scholarship to discover the Jesuit influence on poetry, philosophy, geography, art, drama, ballet, science, mathematics, politics, theology, asceticism, education, religious freedom and history. Today the Jesuit Society has 24,400 members (4,700 in the U.S.) in 1,825 houses, in 112 countries.

### Jesuits as scholars and explorers

Jesuits have always been explorers, scholars and educators. They came to Brazil in 1565 and by 1615 they had five colleges/universities in Brazil. And long before the pilgrims arrived in Plymouth in 1620, the Jesuits arrived in Florida in 1566. Their foray into Paraguay in 1588 which was celebrated in the movie "The Mission", lasted for 160 years and resulted in a massive collection of 57 settlements run for and governed by 113,000 Paraguayan natives where Jesuits taught them how to live together in security and in comfort while defending themselves against the Spanish slave traders. By 1700 this Paraguayan civilization was so advanced that they were printing their own books and were writing music that competed with the Gregorian Chant.

John Jacques Rousseau, hardly an admirer of the Jesuits, called it one of the most altruistic ventures of human history. This noble enterprise was destroyed by the Spanish King Charles III in a brutal massacre in 1767 because the Jesuits had prevented the Spaniards from kidnapping the natives for their profitable slave trade.



*Explorer Eusebio Kino and Saint Ignatius Loyola  
Over 400 stamps (40 countries) commemorate Jesuits*

Two of the fifty statues in Statuary Hall in the Capitol in Washington, D.C. are Jesuits: Eusebio Kino and Jacques Marquette. Five of the eight largest rivers of the world were first charted by



Jesuit explorers and the border between Russia and China was plotted by the Jesuit Ferdinand Verbiest 300 years ago. Jesuits have been working in Russia for four centuries, many were jailed by communists in this century, some of whom today are being considered for beatification. China recently announced that a monument to the famous Jesuit scientists of the 17th century will be erected in Zhaoqing - China of all places! Since 1948 China jailed 120 Jesuits. In fact, no other religious order spent as many man-years in jails as the Jesuits have.

### Jesuits as educators

Through the centuries many Jesuit scholars have impacted society in every intellectual pursuit, but especially in the field of education. Some find it curious that historians place Ignatius Loyola with the world's great innovators of education from Socrates to Dewey. It was Ignatius' original plan that his energetic, well-educated men form a band of roving missionaries like Francis Xavier who would preach and administer the sacraments wherever there was the hope of accomplishing the greater good. It soon became clear to Ignatius, however, that schools offered the greatest possible service to the church. He realized how critical changes in a whole society could come through education, so he revised his original plan and became an enthusiastic champion of systematic education.

From the very beginning these Jesuit schools became one of the most influential exponents of Catholic reform, and this novel Jesuit enterprise was later called "a rebirth of the infant church". But this is not the reason why institutions like the Sorbonne in Paris and Columbia University's Teachers' College in New York City engraved "Loyola" on their walls. Ignatius' particular contribution to education was the fact that he realized education was not an end in itself but rather a means to lead the student to care about other human beings. The genius and innovation he brought to education came from his *Spiritual Exercises* whose object is to free a person from predispositions and biases, thus enabling one to make free choices. They are based on the premise that people who are free enough to say that the world is good, will recognize their own goodness and will live happy and fulfilled lives and be more concerned about fellow human beings.



*Jesuit physicist Roger Boskovich  
on a recent Croatian banknote*





Ignatius infused this ideal of service into the existing pattern of humanistic education and then fashioned these into an orderly process. The norms of instruction, known as the *Ratio Studiorum* or *plan of studies*, established certain basic characteristics for the Jesuit program which included a respect for the varying capacities of students. The organizational genius of Ignatius and his followers, focusing on the individual, stabilized classical and scientific studies gave them a popularity which even Erasmus was not able to achieve. Ignatius' innovations were perpetuated by his followers so that two centuries later in 1750 Jesuits operated 740 endowed Jesuit schools across Europe - all free of charge - paid for by benefactors and the state. Jesuits were called the schoolmasters of Europe during these centuries, not only because of their own schools but also for their pre-eminence as scholars and for the thousands of textbooks they composed.

### **Jesuit success in education**

Among the characteristics which contributed to Jesuit success and to a new international educational style, John O'Malley, S.J. in his book *The First Jesuits* includes the fact that the schools welcomed students from every social class. Also they borrowed the insistence on self-activity which reflected the plan of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Jesuits sponsored a clear, coherent, and basically simple religious program, adaptable to students of different ages and backgrounds which sought to move the student beyond merely pious practices to an inner appropriation of ethical values. They used confraternities such as the Marian Sodalties to further articulate their religious program. All of these characteristics later became quite evident at Baghdad College, consisting not only in written compositions and oral repetitions in the classroom, but also in plays, disputations, and other spectacles open to the public.

The Jesuits were on the whole better educated and motivated than most pre-university schoolmasters almost anywhere in Europe. Further, they tried to influence their students more by their example than by their words. They repeatedly inculcated in one another the importance of loving their students, of knowing them as individuals and of enjoying a respectful familiarity with them. Whenever these ideals were achieved, they were crucially important in contributing to a school's success. Failure to achieve them would perhaps be even more telling. The blend of these features resulted in all educational programs that in some parts of Europe appeared as an improvement on practices already in operation, in other parts as a stunning innovation. (O'Malley, 1993, p.226)

## **The network of Jesuit schools**

This largest of all religious orders and largest missionary society in the Church educates 1.5 million students. Today there are 90 Jesuit colleges in 27 countries. In the United States the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities have over a million living graduates. There are also 430 Jesuit high schools in 55 countries (46 are here in the United States). In these schools the Ignatian system of values has attracted exceptionally competent faculty and highly qualified students who form a Jesuit network in pursuit of the same goals.

Graduates of Jesuit schools are expected to make mature commitments to values and should acquire the self-discipline to live by these values. They should tolerate diversity of perspective and have a critical respect for their own cultural tradition. They should have developed competence in the skills of analysis, judgment and expression and be aware of their interdependence with their fellow men and women. They should know that theirs is a privileged position in a world where most people are poor and oppressed by the conditions they live in. They should be "men and women for others," that is, the good things, material and spiritual, which they want for themselves they should want for others too. They should be able to see in their own lives signs of a transcendent life and means of access to it. In Jesuit schools the Catholic tradition is nourished and there is a vibrant liturgical life as well as a faith perspective that motivates students and faculty to serve the marginalized.

Ignatian education, which began in 1547, is still committed today to the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement. Because of this, both Jesuit and lay educators in Jesuit schools have been a thorn in the side of tyrants for more than four centuries. Jesuits were often dismissed from countries and frequently involved in awesome controversies. They battled remote Roman clerics who during the "Chinese Rites" controversy forbade Jesuits working in China to allow Chinese converts to show traditional reverence for their ancestors because it seemed like ancestor worship. The ill-informed Roman decision proved a disaster for the Jesuit effort to spread the faith. Jesuits were a fearsome threat to the Spanish slave traders working in Paraguay because they organized the natives into defensible settlements as they had done for the Huron Indians in Canada a century previous. One recent example is the murder by the El Salvador military of the two housekeepers and six Jesuits who were determined to promote justice and to spread the Ignatian vision, teaching love and concern for others, which is the Jesuit program.





## Chapter 2

# Beguiling Challenges Beckoned Jesuits for Centuries



*The real optimist is the one with the conviction that God knows,  
can do and will do what is best for mankind.*

*Christians must live for others.*

*Pedro Arrupe, S.J. (1907-1991) Jesuit Superior General*

## Early apostolic ventures in Mesopotamia

### Various religious orders

The brief span of 37 Jesuit years at Baghdad College contrasts with the centuries of Christian presence and was only the latest in a long line of efforts made by other Jesuits and other religious orders.

Members of the Dominican Order have been in the northern part of Iraq since 1748 and the Carmelites came to Baghdad in 1623, but, the Capuchins had been there before either order. The ancient church of the Carmelites in the center of Baghdad, testifies to the Carmelite's long tenure in Iraq. They founded Catholic primary schools of high quality while attending to the pastoral needs of the Latin Catholics. They founded the St. Joseph school in 1737. In the magazine *Baghdad* (May, 1971, #3), published by the Ministry of Information, Dar Al-Jumhuriya calls attention to a learned and dedicated Carmelite scholar and Arabist, Fr. Anastase Maria of St. Elias, O.C.D. born in 1866, who published articles in

no less than 62 periodicals about the Arab World using 37 noms de plume. The Arab Academy in Cairo elected him among its first members in 1932.

### Interest of the Jesuits in Islam

Ignatius Loyola was always interested in Muslims and dealing with Islam remained one of his highest priorities. He wanted to learn about Islam partly because Muslims controlled the Holy Land, and he sent Jesuits to Egypt in 1550 when the Jesuit Order was only 10 years old. There was a more profound interest in the Middle East at the beginning of the 19th century with the apostolate dealing mostly with dissident Christian groups but always with an interest in Islam. There were numerous Christian massacres, especially during the four centuries of Turkish rule which ended in 1918. Jesuits had been working in Syria and in Turkey, and before the Armenian massacre in 1915 Turkey had 11 Jesuit houses. Both the Jesuit General Wlodimir Ledochovsky, S.J. and Gerhard Bowering, S.J. commented on the modern Jesuit interest in Islam.

Worldwide, quite a number of Jesuits today have the privilege of being teachers of Muslim students. The guiding principle of a changing attitude toward Muslims on the part of the Catholic Church in today's world can be found in the declaration *Nostra aetate* of Vatican II. The document looks on the Muslims with respect and recognizes their worship of the one God, merciful and almighty, who created heaven and earth and has spoken to human beings. It commends the Muslims for their submission to God, their veneration of Jesus and Mary, their moral conduct, and their life of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. It evokes the example of Abraham as a common bond of faith and invites both Christians and Muslims to overcome centuries of mutual hostilities and cooperate toward justice and peace. The Church explicitly exhorts not only to dialogue but also to collaboration with the followers of Islam. "God's saving will also embraces those who acknowledge the Creator, and among them especially the Muslims, who profess the faith of Abraham and together with us adore the one God, the Merciful One, who will judge men on the Last Day." (Bowering, 1993, pp. 1-3)

St. Ignatius even thought of founding colleges for this purpose in Sicily and Malta where future missionaries could devote themselves to the study of the Arabic language; if the Society had permitted it, he would very gladly have given the last days of his life to this peaceful and apostolic Mission. . . . I



have determined to establish at Rome in the Pontifical Oriental Institute a scientific center dealing with questions relating to Islam. (Ledohovsky, 1937, pp. 719-723)

Baghdad was a very important center in the Muslim world, near Najaf and Karbala and with Muslim dominated countries for hundreds of miles in every direction. At the request of the Vatican in 1850, two Jesuits joined a caravan heading for Baghdad to investigate the feasibility of starting a school there. Their caravan having been robbed during each crossing of the Syrian desert, they notified Rome that the time was not yet opportune to embark on such a project. Shortly after many Jesuits were killed by the Druzes during the 1860 massacre of Christians in Syria.

### **Interest of the Jesuits in other Christians**

The Jesuits had always been convinced that the Oriental Christians themselves are the most effective apostles of the faith when they present a vigorous Christianity to the Muslims. This they certainly had accomplished in the sixth through the ninth centuries when they preached the faith in a campaign that extended to China and included the countries in between. This is related in the book *Nestorian Documents and Relics in China* by P. Y. Sacki.

In his *History of the Jesuits*, Bangert relates the Jesuit efforts to bring about the reunion of Catholic and Orthodox Christians in spite of the fact that a war-torn Middle East had made communication between the Maronites and Rome a practical impossibility for centuries. For one of the early missions Pope Gregory chose two Jesuits, Tommaso Raggio and Gianbattista Eliano, both Hebrew and Arabic scholars. They made their report to Rome in 1580 and Pope Gregory was so delighted by the success of the mission, he founded in Rome the Maronite College and placed it under the supervision of the Society of Jesus. Pope Gregory depended on the Jesuits to continue these delicate discussions with other groups but these later efforts were less successful.

In March, 1583, three Jesuits, counselors to Bishop Leonard Abel, left Rome to meet with leaders of the separated groups. These and other Jesuits who followed held conferences in many of the ancient cities of the Levant, but they were dealing with men who were custodians, and consciously so, of old and not readily discarded traditions which reached back to the days of Nestorius and Dioscorus. Success, which often seemed within their grasp, eluded them like a wraith. The patriarch of the Jacobites was willing to accept papal supremacy but not the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon; the patriarch of the Armenians made a profession of Catholic faith

only to be haled to Constantinople and to have his decision reversed; conferences with the Melkites at Damascus broke down under pressure of the hostile Turk; the entourage of the patriarch of Jerusalem resisted his desire to renounce schism; in Egypt a new patriarch annulled the letter of submission to Rome sent by Gabriel VIII; the patriarch Elias VIII of the Chaldeans (in Mosul), after bringing the Jesuits to his country, informed them that there was nothing to change in his creed. Cairo, Mosul, Damascus, Jerusalem, Edessa, all became for the Jesuits scenes of blighted hopes. (Bangert, 1986, p. 149)

### Other Middle East Jesuit schools

Arab and French Jesuit colleagues had been conducting a celebrated college in Cairo for more than a century along with other missionary congregations and were working in the same field. There was ample opportunity for Catholic education for the Christians in Egypt, however, the Christians of Iraq were not so fortunate. Their country, freed from 400 years of Turkish rule after the First World War, was becoming the modern Kingdom of Iraq, and Baghdad, as its capital was undergoing a tremendous revival. There was not a single Catholic secondary school in the country and it was to remedy that situation that Baghdad College was established by the American Jesuits in the first place.

The Jesuit objective in Baghdad was to help form an active Christian community through sound Christian education. At the same time, by educating a number of Muslim young men they would encourage greater tolerance and understanding of the faith, which would work to the mutual advantage of Christians and Muslims alike.

Though Muslims were admitted to Baghdad College, the objectives of the mission never included proselytizing Muslims. A loyal supporter of the Baghdad Jesuits, Boston's Cardinal Cushing, never seemed to grasp this idea and expressed his opinion to his Jesuit friends: "This mission has to be the biggest waste of money and manpower in the history of the church - not a single convert from Islam!"

Nonetheless, the Baghdad Mission always had a special place in the affections of the New England Province and a particular claim to its spiritual and material support because the "Baghdadi Jesuits" seemed to exemplify the spirit and the traditions of the whole Jesuit Society.



*S.J. seal*





*The ruins of Babylon*

## **Recent apostolic ventures in Iraq**

### **Petitions from the Baghdad Christians**

As far back as 1921 the Chaldean Patriarch, Mar Emmanuel II Thomas, who graduated from the Jesuit University of St. Joseph in Beirut, petitioned Rome for a Jesuit college in Baghdad. Also the Chaldean, Syrian and Armenian bishops together with Catholic priests of the different Middle Eastern rites as well as the leading Christian leaders of the country requested Pope Pius XI to send religious to open a Christian secondary school for boys in Baghdad. At the time only a few Catholic primary schools for girls and a few small primary schools for boys existed. Pius XI thought the time had come and passed the request on to Father General Ledochowski who accepted the undertaking with its numerous responsibilities. His first call was to the American provinces of the Society since English-speaking Fathers were most needed and Americans were more plentiful.

In his dissertation on the history of the early days of Baghdad College, Charles Bashara describes good relations between the Patriarch and the King which made the invitation to the Jesuits more secure. He draws his data from the Chaldean Patriarch's correspondence as well as from the New England Province archives.

The Chaldean Patriarch, Msgr. Yusuf [actually Mar Emmanuel II], described a [1931] visit of King Faisal I to Mosul revealing his close connection to the King. "His Majesty lent a very attentive ear to me and was quite satisfied with the information which I gave him and, at the conclusion of our



interview I expressed to him the great attachment and profound submission of the Christians and especially the Catholics to the Iraqi Government, conforming to our holy belief and to the recommendations reiterated by our August Superiors and that as faithful subjects of His Majesty we did not desire anything but the security of life, the preservation of our rights and traditions, the free exercise of our religion, and the personal statutes, at least as in the time of the Turks.

His Majesty assured me of the great regard which he holds toward my humble person, his conviction of the loyalty of his Catholic subjects and of his strong disposition to supply all of our wants for the present and in the future. On the evening of the 5th [of June 1931] the Patriarch was invited to join the other notables of Mosul at the king's table and was given the place of honor at Faisal's right hand. Faisal . . . said to me with emotion: "Just as our forefathers tried to give unity to us by their good intelligence and mutual services, let us do the same for our grandsons and let us prepare them for a future full of peace and happiness." Faisal's visit boded well for the patriarch and his community, which escaped the massacre of the Church of the East communities in 1933. Yusuf [actually Mar Emmanuel II] was relieved to know that he enjoyed the confidence of the king and with that, felt secure in pressing Rome and the Jesuits to open the proposed school. (Bashara, 1985, pp. 25-28)

### Rome's response

What was needed to begin such an enterprise, more than the talents of an educator and executive was the wisdom demanded in dealing with the leaders and the diplomats of an Arab country and of a suspicious Muslim public.



*Fr. Edmund Walsh, S.J.*

## The 1931 arrival of the Proto-founder Fr. Walsh

Georgetown's Fr. Edmund A. Walsh, S.J. was chosen and sent to Rome for initial briefing and then to Baghdad as a Vatican representative. Pius XI emphasized with Fr. Walsh the dire need of a Catholic college in Baghdad, but the project was faced with a double difficulty, personnel and financial. Both agreed that the personnel problem could be solved with the help of the Jesuit Superior General and the second by using the reserves of the *Catholic Near East Welfare Association*, a Vatican sponsored foundation of which Fr. Walsh was both a fund-raiser and an officer. Fr. Walsh had a practical plan involving the American Jesuit colleges.

In order to profit by the present tendency of looking toward America for direction and assistance, it would be highly advantageous to place the school under the patronage and the auspices of four high standing Catholic American universities such as Georgetown, Fordham, St. Louis and Boston College. This could be done by forming a corporation, an educational association made up of one man from each of the universities. The Father conducting the school would have full power to act in the name of this corporation. The reputation and the experience of the American universities would be a supporting influence for the school as well as a guarantee of prestige and of a high standard of studies. Moreover, in virtue of its affiliation with American universities, the school could look forward to them to assist in its development financially and otherwise.

The Government of Iraq would also be awakened to the realization that this particular part of its people belong to a great international family. This arrangement would likewise exclude any idea of a political protectorate. Its results would be noticed in a purely moral order and hence should be very effective. (Gallagher, 1959, p. 138)

Fr. Walsh arrived in Baghdad on March 7, 1931 and made his contact with the Iraqi Government. The government had no difficulty granting him permission to open a school of higher education and agreed that starting with a secondary school made sense. In a treaty which had recently been signed by the United States and Iraq, Americans were granted full freedom for founding and running schools in Iraq. It was not, however, until a year later on March 5, 1932, after informing Iraq that the Iraq-American Educational Association was ready to undertake

operations, that he received the following cablegram, as a confirmation of the one he had received nearly a year before but had not made public. A similar letter to Fr. Rice is found in Appendix D.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, BAGHDAD, IRAQ.

DATE 5/3/32 NO. 1350

To: Edmund A Walsh, Esq. S.J. Ph.D.,

Vice President, Georgetown University, Washington D.C.

Subject:- Permission to found a Secondary School.

Dear Sir,

Reference your letter of 14th January, 1931.

On 17th February, 1931 the following cablegram was dispatched to you.

"Permission foundation Secondary School granted conditional compliance with all Government requirements and regulations".

We take this opportunity to wish you complete success.

Yours sincerely, Abdul Hussein Chalabi,

Minister of Education.

### College vs. boarding house

The only sticky problem in Fr. Walsh's negotiations came neither from the hierarchy nor from the government of Iraq but from the Vatican's Oriental Congregation which wanted to start a boarding house not a school. The Jesuits as well as Iraq's bishops assumed that they were negotiating for a self sustained college while the Oriental Congregation used the peculiar word "convitto" or boarding house. Fr. Walsh's instructions from the Oriental Congregation limited the Jesuit work to a boarding house for students in government schools, apparently assuming that the Jesuits were not up to the task of starting and directing a college in Iraq. The Jesuits and the Iraqi bishops were shocked at the Congregation's very restricted plan which was so beneath their expectations. They were determined to have a secondary school which would possibly pave the way for a later college and university.

Fr. Walsh visited not only Baghdad but Mosul and Basra. He found the Christian leaders unanimous in demanding a school not a boarding house. Fr. Walsh represented the wishes of Iraq's bishops to the Congregation in a very forceful manner. The Oriental Congregation bowed to the wishes of the Iraqi bishops and reluctantly allowed the college to go forward. They did not take the reversal of their plans graciously, however, and blamed Fr. Walsh for being unwilling to settle for a mere boarding house. As a

result he was excluded from further business between the Congregation and the mission. In fact the plans for Fr. Walsh to lead four Jesuits to Baghdad to start the school were changed by the Oriental Congregation. Furthermore, the Congregation saw to it that the funds to start the school were not given directly to the Jesuits but were funneled to them through New York's Cardinal Hayes. It was Cardinal Hayes who informed Fr. Walsh that his part in the project was over and done.

Fr. Walsh not only had to cope with Roman bureaucrats but during his journey to visit the Bishop of Mosul he met the head of a tribe associated with satanic influence. The head of the tribe measured his wealth in the number of his 5,000 sheep. He asked how many sheep the great White Father in Rome had. His eyes widened in awe and/or disbelief when Fr. Walsh answered: "about 320 million".

### **The Iraq-American Educational Association**

As a result of Fr. Walsh's report, the Presidents of eight American Jesuit colleges formed an association to sponsor and aid the educational work in Iraq. This corporation acted as a sort of holding company, to offer both moral support and representation, if such should be necessary. These eight institutions were: Boston College, the University of Detroit, Georgetown University, Loyola University in Chicago, Loyola University of New Orleans, St. Louis University, and the University of San Francisco. For some reason Aloysius J. Hogan, S.J., President of Fordham University, decided not to sign, so Fordham was not involved in the association.

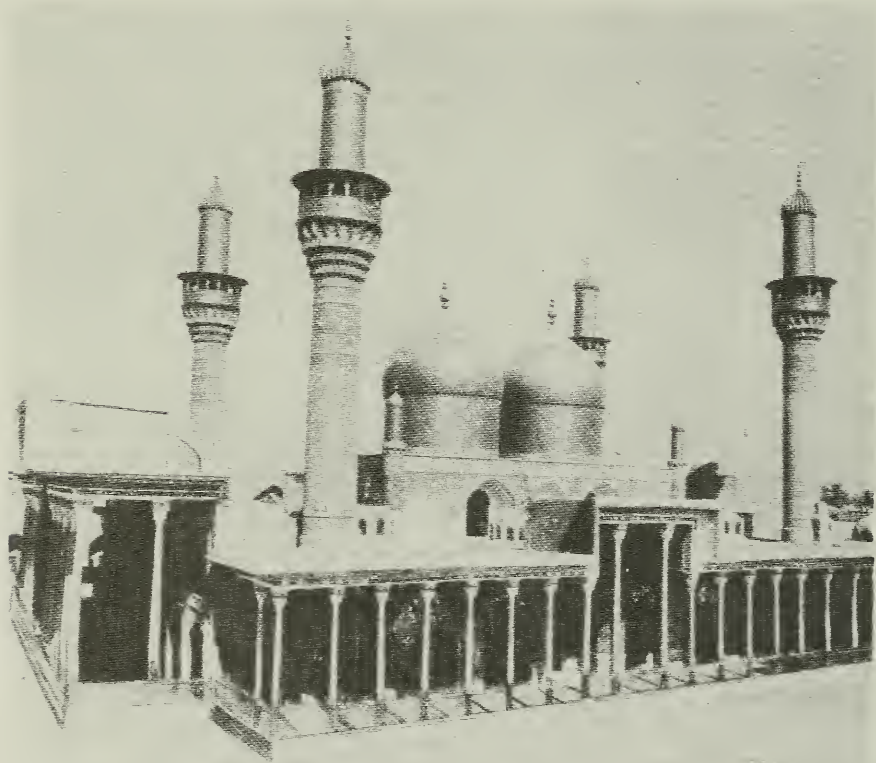
This association was later replaced by the Iraq American Educational Association, duly registered with and approved by the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad. The legal certificate for the incorporation of the Iraq-American Educational Association is in the files of the Recorder of Deeds of the District of Columbia, dated April 9, 1932. A replica of this certificate with the names of the participants is found in Appendix D. One significant item in this particular document is that the term for which the corporation is organized is *perpetual*. The actual Incorporators were W. Coleman Nevils, S.J., Edmund A. Walsh, S.J., and Joseph A. Farrell, S.J., who were, respectively, the President, the Vice-President and the Treasurer of Georgetown University at that time.

Ever since Fr. Walsh had left Iraq, had reported to the Oriental Congregation and had visited Pope Pius XI and after all the Church and government permissions were in place, the bishops of Iraq were impatiently awaiting the arrival of the Jesuits from America, writing letters urging them to hasten their coming. In January, 1932, the Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon, Mar Emmanuel II Thomas wrote:



Not only many Christians, but notable Muslims as well, are asking 'Where is Father Walsh? When is he coming to begin the great work so necessary for the happiness and prosperity of our people?' We have heard that Father William Rice and four companions destined to begin the work in the Capital of Iraq await only the authorization of the Iraqi Government to set out for Baghdad, but after making inquiries at the American Consulate here, and at the Office of the Minister of the Interior, we can get no confirmation of the rumor. (Gallagher, 1959, p. 140)

They did not have long to wait. At this same time the American Jesuit provincials were busy picking four suitable men for the job. As for the authorization of the Iraqi Government, they anticipated no difficulty and left America without clearance sure that it would eventually arrive. They were right, it did.



*The famous mosque of Kadhimain, near Sulaikh*





## Chapter 3

# Jesuits, Iraq and Iraqis all in Their Youth During the Thirties



*Three things are necessary for the salvation of man:  
to know what he ought to believe;  
to know what he ought to desire;  
and to know what he ought to do.  
St. Thomas Aquinas: Two Precepts of Charity [1273]*

## The beginnings of the Jesuit endeavor

### Baghdad in 1932

To get an idea of Baghdad's geography in 1932 and the intricate maze of streets which the early Jesuits encountered, one has merely to read the wonderful account written on the 25th anniversary of Baghdad College in an article entitled *Baghdad In the Year 1932* which was written in Arabic by Zuhair al-Dhafir, Baghdad College '52 -'57 and which appeared in the 1957 *Al Iraqi Yearbook* on pages 6 and 7 in the Arabic section. It was translated by David Leon. In comparing his time (1957) with the birth of his country (and of Baghdad College in 1932) Zuhair was demonstrating the rapid progress of his country. Part of his essay is reprinted here. A map of the city with a detailed description of 19 sections of the city can found in Appendix D.

Baghdad, after World War I, could be described as having a very poor and inadequate infrastructure. At the time, Baghdad was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, the government then permitted al-Rashid street as it is known today, to be

used only for military purposes. It stretched from Eastern gate to al-Muadham gate. As for al-Karkh area situated on the other side of the Tigris River, there were hardly any streets, except a narrow winding street that started from the old bridge to the train station at the west end of al-Karkh area. There was also another street which ran from the train station heading towards Kadhemiya. The situation remained the same until the year 1930, when some landlords from al-Orfaliya district at Eastern gate, began to lease their lands as small lots on which adjacent houses were built mostly according to eastern style resembling Baghdad's old houses, with the exception of having a relatively upright position and straight streets.

In 1932, Baghdad did not have any expansion whatsoever in its side-streets, except for al-Rashid street. However as for Ghazi and Shaikh Umar streets, they were constructed after this period. Also in Baghdad in 1932, large buildings, universities and theaters did not exist up until the period before World War II and shortly thereafter. During the years 1932 and 1933, many peasants migrated to the city of Baghdad when the countryside was hit by agricultural hardships while on the other hand Baghdad was witnessing expansion in the housing sector.

Furthermore, a great number of tribal sheikhs whose special circumstances compelled them to stay in Baghdad for long durations, decided later to move their domicile from the countryside to the capital on a permanent basis. . . . In 1932, Baghdad did not have fixed bridges. The bridges were very narrow, weak and were constructed on small steel pillars. Often times these bridges would weaken during the flood season and break apart which would result in obstructing people's interest and delaying traffic. These bridges had to be raised and lowered daily to let large sailboats pass up and down the river. (1957 *Al Iraqi Yearbook*, Zuhair al-Dhafir '57, pp. 6,7)

### **The arrival of the founders**

After the decision was made by Rome and by the American provincials to start the school in Baghdad the next step was to find Jesuits to do the job. The provincials decided to start with one man from each of four provinces. Their choice of these Jesuits was quite intricate, seeking men who could be spared from local apostolates, who knew several languages, who had experience as educators and who were outgoing and self-sufficient. It is curious that a minor criterion seemed to favor men whose names sounded "American" - whatever that could have meant.

The choices finally were: the superior, New England's Fr. Rice (whose father's French Canadian name Raiche had been changed to



Rice) and Chicago's Fr. Madaras who arrived in Baghdad in early March, 1932, and were joined a few months later by New York's Fr. Coffey and California's Fr. Mifsud. The fact that the names of all four men had Arabic meanings had nothing to do with their selection: Rice = president, Madaras = school, Coffey = enough! and Mifsud = corrupter. Later Fr. Mifsud discretely changed his name to Fr. Miff which had no meaning at all. Within a few years the Iraq Mission was almost entirely made up of members of the New England Province. Until 1960 the Rector of Baghdad College was also the Superior of the Mission.

The first entry of the Baghdad Mission (*Missio Iraquensis*) which appeared in the New England Province catalog came in the 1933 edition. The catalogs were published in January and so were four months behind the school schedule (September - May). Translated, here are the assignments (which were sometimes rather vaguely expressed in Latin) of the earliest Baghdadi Jesuits during the first four years. The 1933 catalog revealed what the four founders taught and what jobs they had.



*The four Jesuit Founders*

Fr. W. Rice	Superior	French	Apos. Prayer
Fr. E. Madaras	Minister	Fourth year	Drama
Fr. E. Coffey	Principle	Fourth year	Sodality
Fr. J. Mifsud	Discipline	Fifth year	Choir

In the following year the 1934 catalog added three names.

Fr. A. Wand	Minister	History	Librarian
Fr. J. Merrick	Counselor	Science & Mathematics	
Fr. J. Scanlon		Second year	

In the next year the 1935 catalog added only one name.

Fr. F. Sarjeant		Fifth year	Drama
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In the following year the 1936 catalog added seven names including the first Jesuit Scholastics (those not yet ordained) and the first Jesuit Brother (Br.). Frs. Scanlon's and Coffey's names were deleted since they were reassigned to other jobs.

Fr. F. Anderson		French	Drama
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Fr. V. Gookin	Biol/Chem	
Fr. C. Mahan	English	Debating
Mr. W. Casey	History	(Study Arabic)
Mr. J. Connell	Second year	(Study Arabic)
Br. F. McGuinness		Mechanic
Br. J. Servaas		Infirmarian

Jobs were interchanged: for instance the drama director and the office of "minister" (the domestic administrator) seemed to change often. Apparently they were not very popular assignments. These few men had other jobs which do easily not fit on this list.



*Early Baghdad College students*

One such assignment *exam. cand.*, not mentioned because of lack of space, appears after four names each year, even when there were only four men. It indicates the level of optimism these early Jesuits had, because the expression "*exam. cand.*" assigns a man to examine the credentials of students who present themselves as candidates for entrance into the Society of Jesus. The office was not needed for a long time since the first student to enter the Jesuit Order was Stanley Marrow who graduated in 1947, a full 15 years after the first Jesuits arrived.

### **Coinciding with Iraq's independence**

The Jesuit enterprise started the same year that Iraq obtained its independence after four centuries of Turkish rule followed by 14 years under the British. Iraq became a monarchy in June of 1921 when Faisal I was made King of Iraq and in 1932 Iraq became a member of the League of Nations. The first 10 years were difficult years for the mission as well as for the country. There were many changes of government during this time; in fact, seven internal insurrections occurred in the period 1937-1941. In her book, *The Modern History of Iraq*, Phebe Marr refers to this decade as "an era of instability." The Assyrian insurrection



and the subsequent deaths of many Assyrians (numbering somewhere between 230 to 900) in the village of Sum'male near Fiesh Khaboor (Pesh Kabur) and the looting of all 60 neighboring villages in early August of 1933 furnish examples of this instability.

Under the leadership of the 26 year-old Patriarch Mar Sham'un, Assyrians were seeking the same Assyrian autonomy which they enjoyed under Turkish rule. The Iraqi Army's defeat of the "invincible" Assyrians gave the army prestige that it lacked and allowed them to push through a conscription law which later was to affect the fledgling Jesuit school. The brutality and size of the massacre on August 4, 1933 brought worldwide attention and caused the League of Nations to question Iraq's ability at self rule, particularly regarding minorities. (Marr, 1985, p. 158) and (Joseph, 1961, p. 203) This story is related by Fr. Madaras and is found in Appendix D (Madaras, 1936, p. 172-3). It is told in a very detached manner, being careful not to touch upon any political overtones.

### **Iraq's early problems**

After independence, unrest in the schools was not uncommon and the demonstrations were not always clearly political. In his book *Iraq Between Two Wars* (Simon, 1986, p. 109), Reeva Simon tells of 50 students who went on strike in 1931, "alleging that the problems given to them by their mathematics teacher were much too difficult," and in 1937 and 1938 students left *en masse* when they felt that the final examination in mathematics was too difficult, demanding and receiving revised exams from the Ministry of Education.

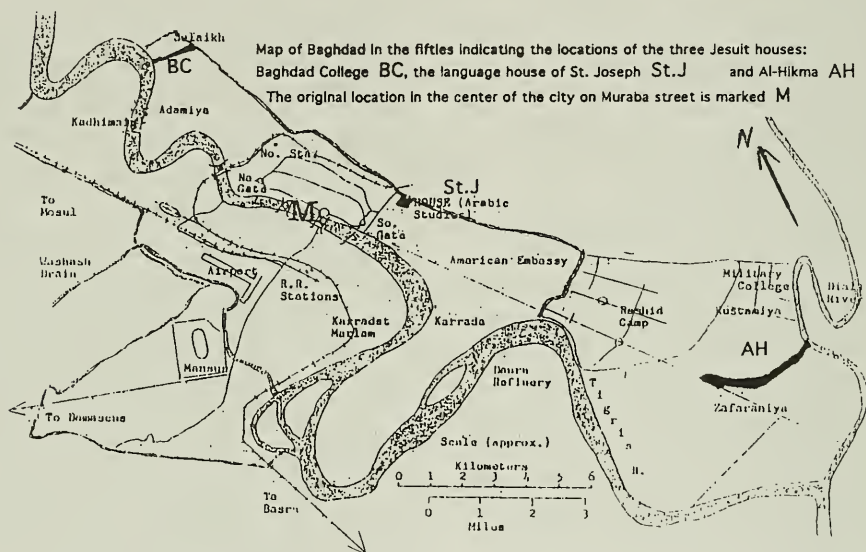
Further instability followed the sudden fatal heart attack of King Faisal I on September 7, 1933 in Geneva which left the throne to his 21 year-old son Ghazi who made clear his dislike of the British. On April 4, 1939, King Ghazi was killed in a mysterious car accident. The official version of his death has always been suspected by Iraqis as a British concoction. The successor to Ghazi was his infant son Faisal II, so a regent, Abdul-Ilah was chosen who was both brother of Ghazi's wife, Queen 'Aliyah, and also Ghazi's cousin. (Marr, 1985, p. 78)

Even though their first decade was an interesting one and political intrigue seemed to surround them on every side, the early Jesuits remained informed but detached, keeping their mission of education of Iraqi youth their sole preoccupation.



## The locations of Baghdad College

During the 37 years following 1932 the Jesuit mission and the country itself grew together from infancy to maturity. In these 37 years Iraq's population expanded from 3.5 million to 8.5 million while the Jesuit population grew from 4 to 61. Iraq's secondary school (including intermediate) enrollment grew from 2,076 Iraqi students in three schools to 270,000 in 840 schools, while the enrollment in the Jesuit schools increased from 120 students in rented houses to 1,100 students in nine buildings at Baghdad College.



### Along the Tigris River

During its first two years the school used two rented houses in the center of Baghdad on a side street (Muraba St.) near the river. The early days were described by Ramzi Y. Hermiz in excerpts from the letters of Fr. Edward F. Madaras, S.J.

The school was located in rental property at 11/45 Muraba Street on the left bank (east side) of the Tigris (Rasafa). The school was made up of two houses "... which were not gems of the builder's craft ..." The classroom "... floors were of rough uneven brick ... the rooms too small, the light not so good, windows and doors were ill fitting ... and when a dust storm came up, the atmosphere was not pleasant ...." For



athletic fields, there were two internal court yards; 25' by 40'. . . 375 boys had applied; 120 were accepted, becoming 107 at the end of the first year. Ages ran from 13 to 20, with around 15 years an average age. There were 4 grades in first classes: 5th & 6th Elementary, first and second Intermediate. Besides the four Jesuits, there were five other teachers: Father Sheiko (a Chaldean Priest), Mr. George Abbosh, Mr. Razzouk Isa, Mr. Salim Hilantu, Mr. Walter Weirs. There were classes six days a week, Monday through Saturday. The school day was from 8:00 am to 4:10 pm winter time and 7:00 am to 1:00 pm summer. Within a few months, the Library (with all books arriving as donations) became the best of its kind in Baghdad. ". . . the boys were surprised to learn that they could actually take home to read whatever book they wanted, free of charge. . .". To many students, it was the first time they saw ". . . real black boards, history maps, hygiene charts, projectors, movie machines, and . . . individual arm-chair seats. In the eyes of their Jesuit Teachers, the boys ". . . have completely won our hearts. They study hard, they are respectful, obedient, and well disciplined, as well as definitely religious. (Ramzi Hermiz, *Reunion VII Yearbook*, 1990, p. 4)

In the amazingly short space of a few years Baghdad College had substantially realized the primary purpose which had been proposed in 1931 - to provide secondary education for Christian boys. From the outset, however, its doors were open to Iraqi non-Christians. The first advertisement to appear in an Arabic newspaper described Baghdad College as "An Iraqi School for Iraqi Boys." This policy and spirit were faithfully maintained, as was also a high standard of academic excellence.

One of the first advertisements in English concerning Baghdad College was carried in the *Iraq Times* September 10, 1932 on the front page explaining the intentions and methods of the school.

BAGHDAD COLLEGE High School Department  
 A Select Secondary School for Boys conducted by  
 The American Jesuits Standard Academic Courses  
 SUPERVISED STUDY, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, REGISTERED INFIRMARIAN  
 Courses Offered in 1932-33: Fifth and Sixth Preparatory  
 First and Second Intermediate (High School).  
 For terms, apply to THE PRINCIPAL, Gelani St. 13/203  
 Hours: 10 a.m. to noon and 4 to 6 p.m.  
 Last application 9/17. Final Registration, 9/22-23.

The earliest notice presents a long explanation of the origin of

the school and is found in Appendix D along with one of the early report cards. Later advertisements were carried in the *Iraq Times*. On September 13, 1937 it told of the preparation for the Government Exams which reflected a later change in the curriculum and one such is found in the appendix. Similar advertisements were carried in Arabic papers.



*1935 B.C. game of badminton*

### **Real estate dispute**

Some of the Christian families were anxious to help the Jesuits find suitable property for the school. In October 1932, Fr. Rice visited one of these families who owned property that they were eager to sell. He inquired about the price and size of the property but considered it too near traffic since there were plans for a highway adjoining the property and also it was too expensive (@ \$5 per square meter). It seems, however, that he was more polite than he was clear in refusing the offer and gave a different impression to the family. The family claimed that he promised to buy the property and kept pressing the issue until the following June.

The Apostolic Delegate insisted that Fr. Rice end the now public dispute with the family so Fr. Rice called for a trial, being careful to keep it within the Christian community. This trial was held on June 9, 1933 at the Carmelite monastery with three Carmelites presiding and a local Monsignor representing the Apostolic Delegate present. The verdict was that Fr. Rice had not promised anything and owed nothing to the family. This left him free to concentrate his energies to continue the search which eventually led to the purchase of the Sulaikh property.

### **Baghdad College moves to Sulaikh**

In 1934 the school and Jesuit residence were moved out to Sulaikh, four miles north of the center of the city. This Sulaikh





site consisted of 25 acres with a 200 foot frontage on the east bank of the Tigris. It extended back some 3,000 feet towards the desert, widening out to 600 feet and had been purchased as a permanent site for the school. A very large house in the neighborhood, sufficient to accommodate both students and faculty, was rented. Planning for the new school buildings began soon afterwards.

The very earliest students of Baghdad College will remember "the house on the river", the building Baghdad College rented in Sulaikh and used for a time as both school and residence for the Jesuits. Made of mud brick it enclosed a courtyard. It had two stories, all of which opened out onto the courtyard with a gallery around the second floor. The rooms were large enough to serve as classrooms. There was no central heating so we used portable kerosene stoves. The courtyard provided recreation space, even a reduced-size basketball court. It was there many basketball stars performed. And Fr. Frank Anderson who one day was challenged to sink a basket from center court, did so and when challenged again turned around to sink one at the other end! He never tried it again! (Fr. Hussey)

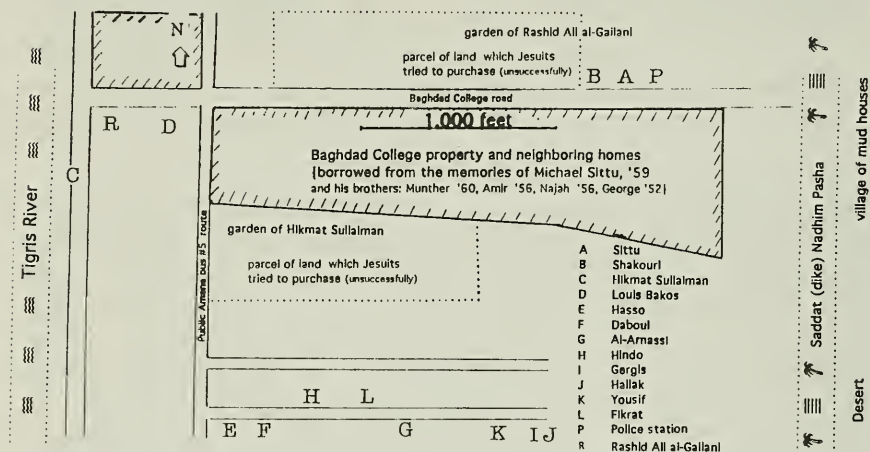
### **The new property**

The map of the property gives an idea of the early and late Baghdad College buildings as they appeared on the scene. The Jesuits occupied this 25 acre property (circumscribed by a wall shown in bold print) in Sulaikh from 1934 to 1969. Nine major buildings and some minor buildings were constructed. Other buildings already existed and were used at certain times. The property extended from the Tigris (west) to the desert (east). It had been an orchard of olive, orange, apricot and date trees, many of which had to be cleared for the buildings and the playing fields, leaving a few olive groves and about 200 date trees. In the east was the *sadda*, a 15 foot-high-dike, topped by a two-lane road, surrounding the city to prevent spring flooding from the Tigris overflow which was swollen by the melting snow in the North. Baghdad College was the terminal point for one of Baghdad's ("Amana") bus lines. In 1953 the Jesuits unsuccessfully attempted to enlarge their property about 11 acres by purchasing neighboring plots, shown within dashed lines.

In 1938 the administration/classroom building was occupied and the faculty/boarders residence was finished in 1939. In 1941 a brick wall of some 1500 feet was completed around the property. The south wall was of mud but the eastern, northern and western walls were impressive brick structures nine feet



high. It was customary to surround property with a substantial wall on the premise that an absent wall signified the owner was indifferent to what happened to his property and the produce it contained. The 1938 administration/classroom building together with a 1940 classroom annex contained 14 classrooms 20 by 24 feet, two classrooms 12 by 20 feet, a lecture room 20 by 24 feet, a laboratory 24 by 52 feet (used for physics, chemistry, and biology), a library 24 by 52 feet (with some 10,000 volumes), rest rooms, a book store, and the principal's office. The residence, contained 40 rooms, housed 15 faculty members and 48 boarders in separate wings, with dining facilities for the full complement of faculty and boarders, numbering 90 in all. Two rented dwellings a five minute walk away furnished living quarters for six additional members of the staff and for 21 boarders.



The property purchased in 1932 (looking north) reached from the Tigris to the desert and was surrounded by charming neighbors: 13 are listed.

As fate would have it, in the same year (1936) that ground was broken for the erection of the first building, the enrollment fell from 132 to 86 students because of complications arising from the Military Conscription Law. This law provided that students attending schools where no Iraq Government School Certificate was required would not be exempt from conscription. Thereafter the necessary certificate was required of each student entering

Baghdad College, and once this was settled the enrollment climbed again. In 1938 the new classroom and administration building was occupied, and the extra space thus gained in the rented building was used to accommodate some 23 boarders as a newly opened boarding department.

By 1939 there were two main buildings: the administration and classroom building, and a residence for faculty and boarders. When it was realized that the old building along the Tigris River which housed the boarders and the 10 Jesuits would not be fit to live in the following year because it was falling apart and it was too distant from the school, the new building was started. It was a race between the final dissolution of the old building and the opening of the new.

They did not expect the house to hold together until July 1 when they had to get out anyway, and it seemed as if they would be living in tents for the following year. The annual threat of flood was at hand - the river being up to the danger point. As the brick kilns are in the desert - where the waters go when the dike breaks - a flood would have held up our building. But the danger dissipated and the building was finished in time. Fr. Sarjeant explained to Fr. Murphy in Boston some of his problems. "You may ask how we are going to move out of our old house on July 1 when our new one will not be ready until a couple of months later. Well we must for the contract expires July 1 - and when you must do things, you find a way. We shall move the belongings of the Fathers down to the school building where they will stay until they can be moved into the new one." (letter #232 5/15/39 from Fr. Sarjeant to Fr. George Murphy Archives #510).

The earliest students had their own view of what effect the "Fatheria" (as the Jesuit Fathers were called) had in their lives and how they first perceived them. One of the earliest students recalls how the transfer from downtown Baghdad to this magnificent new SulaiKh property with its plentiful space effected the sports programs. Even before the buildings were built there was room for endless youthful exuberance, among the students as well as among the Jesuits who often behaved like students.

I joined Baghdad College from the very first day of its birth in the two adjoining houses in Baghdad in 1932. I registered with Fr. Coffey and started in the sixth grade. Fr. Madaras was our *home room* teacher. Our activities that year were limited to volleyball, basketball and handball. During the first two



years at Baghdad College athletic events were limited to games we were able to play in the courtyards of the school. Various tournaments were arranged between the classes which competed against one another. Handball was the most favorite game and I can well remember the teams I captained in basketball and volley ball. The College was later moved to Sulaikh to a large mansion owned by the Gailani Family. The place was huge, surrounded by gardens where students used to sneak out during the break for a puff of a cigarette only to be caught by one of the Fathers who was on duty strolling in the yard. New grounds were made available to us about half a mile away which eventually became the site for the new Campus of Baghdad College. On these grounds we were able to play soccer, and two new games the Fathers introduced to us namely, American football and baseball.

Everyone was enthused to see the Fathers join in playing football and baseball. These games became so popular that later other schools came to watch us and then played baseball with us on our fields. I remember very well that I had taken part in all these games and captained a soccer team of my class. The Fathers used to referee the games. Father Sarjeant was our referee whenever I requested him. We also had running contests, sack races, potato and spoon races, three legged races and other ingenious games.

The Jesuit Fathers also introduced a new type of School life that we were not used to before in the primary Latin School (run by the Carmelite Fathers). Discipline was the paramount rule of the day and left an everlasting effect on our lives. Obedience and respect were the two other features that I feel were instilled into us and which have been in the background of everything I do, and which in turn I have passed to our children. (George Rahim '37)

The Jesuits found themselves in the company of interesting neighbors, one of whom was Hikmat Sulayman a minister of many governments and survivor of numerous coups, he got along well with the Jesuits and would send his two sons to the school. Other neighbors seemed to pick on the new kid on the block, and wanted the Jesuits to donate a section of their newly bought land to the city for use as a police station. One of these was Rashid (Rasheed) Ali who would lead the revolt against the government nine years later. Fr. Rice relates in his diary (11/2/34): "Serkis Abdeni and Rasheed Ali want me to give a corner of our land for a police station. They want the corner right in front, a most beautiful and valuable piece. I have decided to contribute to the police station.





If I did not I would be losing the favor of our neighbors. They could make things difficult, and at the same time they have influence to make things easy". The police station was later located along the road to the desert.



*A quiet library scene*

Another early problem at the new property concerned transportation since roads out of the city were just being constructed. For that reason a complete bus service for the students was necessary and the Jesuits bought the necessary parts and constructed the buses as they needed them.

### **The Villa in the North**

An experiment with a villa house was inevitable due to the 120 degree heat of the Baghdad summer which was not peculiar to Sulaikh, but felt in all of central and southern Iraq. It occurred to the Jesuits that they would recuperate from the year's work and their future work would proceed more smoothly if they retreated for the summer. They inquired about a villa house in the cooler northern part of Iraq. One possible location was in the village of Inishk which they could have the use of for nothing. Fr. Madaras led the Jesuit group and described the adventure.

It is an ideal spot. Near a waterfall and two or three mountain streams that afford several swimming holes, it commands a view of the valley for miles around. There they unpacked, lived in a tent, and with our carpenter and some hired help, began the construction of the *qupranas*, that is, shelters which are wide open on four sides and have a roof of leafy boughs supported by rough beams cut in the neighborhood. They are safe because there is practically no rain here in the summer in these mountains. They constructed

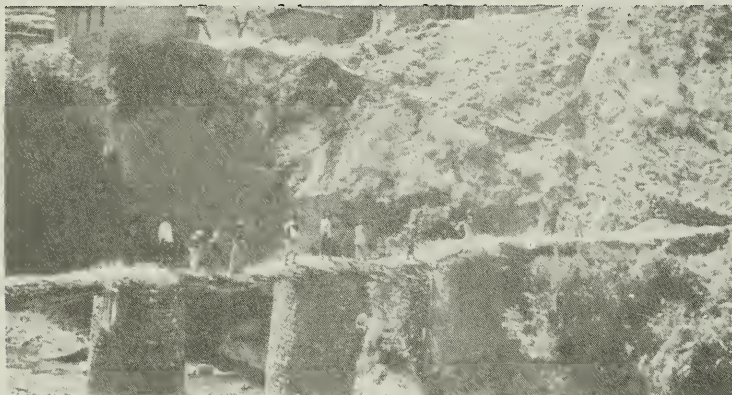


four of them; one a large open one with only one corner closed in, to be used as a dining room and a recreation room, located right beside a copious mountain stream; one rather large, which we lived in for privacy and formed into cubicles and a small chapel with two rough altars in it; one a kitchen and storeroom; and one an out-house.

We were told when we were at Inishk that we would need night guards. In our ignorance of the country we thought they might just be trying to create jobs there, but we hired two with rifles, each one receiving 25 cents a night. Besides we had two large dogs. The fact that some thieves had entered the town on the night of July 3, cut a hole in the wall of the village chief's house while the family slept on the mud roof, and walked off with about \$400 worth of money, jewelry and provisions made us feel that we might need the guards. On Tuesday night, July 19, we had an armed attack.

The moon rose that night at midnight. We retired as usual at ten and at eleven-forty we were rudely awakened by shouts and rifle shots just outside the *quprana*. I could see the flash of the rifles through the leafy walls of my room. No one stirred in the house till the firing ended; then we got up to investigate. The two guards pursued the robbers up the hill and fired again. In a few minutes about ten villagers came up with rifles. Some had circled the village on the far side, had seen the robbers in the moonlight on the slope of the opposite hill and they fired a few shots at them as they made off towards Araden. Do not get alarmed over this - as there is no reason for alarm. We shall take all the precautions necessary. And the Lord has sent a special detail of Guardian Angels to watch over us - as is evident from many happenings around this school.

(*The Jesuit Mission Magazine* Nov. '38 XII #10)



*Some of the terrain of Northern Iraq*



## Post-Turkish education in Iraq

The people of Iraq, called by someone, "a new world infinitely old", are descendants from many races, professing varied religious beliefs. Traditional education was within the given religious communities, the famous Kuttab schools for the Sunni, and the religious universities of Najaf and Karbala for the Shiites. A 12th century philosopher, Al-Namari proposed five goals of education: "learning pleases God and leads to eternal life; learning is a companion in loneliness; learning awakens man's intelligence; learning brings the esteem of others and finally learning leads to wealth."

The Ottomans opened the first modern official secondary schools in 1870 and by the turn of the century there were only about a dozen with less than 2,000 (mostly Turkish) students. Educational development would pick up so that in 1913, in addition to the 83 government schools, there were some 20 private schools with about 5,000 students, the majority of these students (some 3,000) were in the "Israelite Alliance" schools. While the Ottomans held sway, the language for advancement of course was Turkish. With the advent of nationalist sentiment the young Turks placed more insistence on Turkish; the Arabs reciprocated in kind and demanded instruction in Arabic.

Coping with this fact the young government found religious minorities to be an intricate problem when Iraq attempted to build up an educational system satisfactory to all classes. The government schools, since 1920, have been open by law to all students regardless of religion. A difficulty in building up a State educational system was the language to be used. Previous to 1920, all teaching was done in Turkish, a language alien to all students except to the children of Turkish officials and to some areas where Turks lived in larger numbers. After the Turkish occupation of Iraq terminated, the official teaching language changed to Arabic. With this change, and in a country that was largely illiterate, the Ministry of Education had to build the foundations and the superstructure of an educational system simultaneously, and in 12 years (1920-1932) under British supervision. They were astonishingly successful. These difficulties experienced by the government to build up a state system of education, were multiplied for foreigners such as the Baghdad Jesuits who contemplated opening a secondary school, to be followed by a university in later years. On the other hand in 1931, Baghdad was not a very promising place for outsiders undertaking a project meant to develop into a permanent establishment.

By one of history's cruel ironies, the Arabs, who had nurtured



the Muslim faith with which the Ottoman Turks were able to conquer all of southeast Europe, were themselves to be engulfed by the Turks as their conquerors. The dark era through which Iraq passed from the middle of the 16th century up to the First World War was the era of the Ottoman Turkish rule. The Turkish language, foreign to Iraqis, was the medium used in the schools. This, as well as other discriminating factors, kept almost all Iraqis away from the schools.

### **A new secondary school program for Iraq**

When the British took charge, they established another foreign system of schools along the lines of the British program, and so Iraq's secondary science curriculum was modeled after the "O" level course in England. The secondary school program was first published in 1926 and provided for a four-year course. In 1932 the secondary course was lengthened to five years. Finally in 1943 another revision resulted in two parallel curricula of scientific and literary subjects. The scientific track had a very extensive science program provided in both the intermediate as well as the secondary levels. In fact 16 of the 32 hours per week in the secondary grades #10 and #11 were taken up with science or mathematics.

Here are some data on Iraqi schools which demonstrate the growth between 1920 and 1967. The number of schools increased greatly but the increase in the number of students was enormous; it is also true that the ratio of girls to boys grew from 1 to 11 in 1930 and from 1 to 3 in 1968.

#### **Enrollment in Iraq's Secondary Schools**

School Year	Enrollment
1920-21	110
1960-61	135,961
1964-65	216,626

#### **Number of Schools in Iraq**

School Year	Secondary Schools	Primary Schools
1920-21	3	88
1940-41	56	735

#### **Secondary (including Intermediate) School Enrollment in Iraq**

Year	Boys	Girls
1930-31	1,906	170
1930-31	215,144	70,577

Another element that has affected education in Iraq has been the migration to the urban centers. At the end of the 19th century about 70% of the Iraqis were rural peasants; today many have settled in cities. The Iraq Ministry of Planning(1968, p. 35)





states that in 1965 more than 50% of the population lived in urban areas which explains why the urban schools were overcrowded.

In 1927 an important event took place in Kirkuk: oil gushed from an experimental well. This discovery changed many things in Iraq but especially the demands of education. The country now had the means to throw off the chains of poverty and come into the modern industrial 20th century. Besides oil which received the most attention, copper, and other industries were developing in Iraq. These economic opportunities have spurred the modernization of education while the political upheavals and changes of government very often have hindered progress. With each successive government new ministers of education were appointed so that continuity in the efforts to improve education was lacking.

The college preparatory program imposed by the British in the early 1920s laid a foundation for Iraqi secondary education so that further revisions could be made. The changes in Iraqi life caused by the discovery of oil, emancipation of women, and the migration to the towns all affected education and the demands put on it. The success of program revisions like the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which was created in 1946 to promote better understanding throughout the world) project depended, in part, on these factors.

Public education in Iraq since 1920 was almost entirely financed by the government. The following data from an agency of the League of Arab States, the New York based Arab Information Center gives an idea of the growing importance held by education during successive decades.

Only 2% of the national budget was allotted for education in 1920; this grew to 25% in 1965. By 1966 Iraq was rated seventh of all the countries of the world for percentage of national budget spent on education.

(Arab Information Center, 1966, p. 32)

Students of primary, secondary, and vocational schools pay no tuition nor do the students of the institutions of higher learning. Students in some of the professional institutes and colleges sign contracts to serve the government for a certain number of years in return for their free tuition, boarding, books, and medical care.

### **The conscription law**

A major crisis arose for the Jesuits with the publication of the National Defense Law, or Law #9, in 1934 which decreed the conscription of Iraqi youth into the military. Fr. Madaras was

first to comment on this, and then returns to this gnawing problem four times in his famous periodical

We have no reason to suspect that our enrollment next year [1936] will fall off any, at least as regards the first year classes. Concerning the upper classes, there seem to be some misgivings, and that for two reasons. In the first place, Iraq recently passed a universal conscription law which is soon to go into effect; and although students are supposed to be exempt, we have heard that there is some kind of feeling among them that it would be wise to join the military college and get into the army as officers. In the second place (and this concerns only our own students) our graduation certificate has not yet received Government approval, which means that our graduates must submit to an examination to get into Government Medical and Law Schools. In addition, a Government recognized certificate seems to be regarded here as a *sine qua non* for a successful career. But this subject has ramifications around which a whole book could be written. So we desist. (Madaras, 1936 p. 290)



*Baghdad College homemade bus system*

In his Master's degree dissertation at Princeton University Charles Bashara outlines the details of the problem bothering the Jesuits and refers to some of the issues in the new law under Chapter 7, such as articles 27, 29 and 36. These stipulated that private and foreign schools must employ the teachers whom the Ministry of Education appoints for history, geography, civics, and the Arabic language; also these schools would pay the salaries of these teachers and the principals and teachers of private and



foreign schools will not be appointed without the approval of the Ministry of Education. Finally Iraqi students were forbidden to attend foreign primary schools. The crisis lasted for five years and returned to haunt the Jesuits again in the proposed new Education Law of 1939. Observations from Charles Bashara in his dissertation and Fr. Madaras in his *Al Baghdadi* are arranged here in chronological order until the problem finally disappeared in June of 1940.

As outlined in a letter to the Jesuits in December, 1935, the Ministry of Education exempted from military service only those students enrolled in Government-run intermediate and secondary schools or those in schools recognized as valid by the government. Here lay the crux of the Jesuit dilemma, for the authorities at Baghdad College were being told, in effect, that the school was not recognized by the government. The major argument offered by the Iraqi officials was that the Jesuit school had been admitting students who did not have certificates acknowledging that they had passed the government primary school examinations. . . . The threat that the government would not recognize diplomas from the largely foreign institutions which had neglected the primary school certificate requirement effectively, barred graduates from these schools from public employment or admittance into higher government schools to train for civilian or military professions. (Bashara, 1985, p.141)

Just now we are concerned with quite another matter. The Government is summoning our students for military conscription. We are not lawyers, but as far as we understand the conscription law, it states that students attending schools that are recognized by Government as possessing intermediate or secondary status are exempt from conscription. Now [1935], our five-year course embraces both intermediate and secondary grades, that being the terminology used for the first three and the last two years of the course respectively. The whole matter seems to hinge on the meaning of the word *recognized*. Before we ever sailed from America to open Baghdad College, we received the written and explicit permission of the Government for that step, duly signed and approved. (Madaras, 1936 p. 317)



## Truce

The difficulties which our boys have been experiencing with the conscription laws during the past two months [1936] are over - temporarily. A truce has been called by the Government for the present year, during which we have time to swing into line, whatever that may involve, or the matter has been composed in some other way. One of the demands of the Government is that we accept no boys into our school who have not passed the Government primary school examinations. That would mean that the boys from Catholic schools who should fail in these examinations would be excluded from the school. What that would lead to is not difficult to see. Meanwhile we are endeavoring to convince the Government that it ought not to impose any extra burden on non-government schools, but treat them on a basis of equality with their own. Whether we shall be successful in that or not is problematical, but we shall work hard, pray fervently and hope for the best. We ask you to help us with your own prayers. The life of the school may depend on the outcome. Who can say? (Madaras, 1936 p. 342)

## Militarization

We thought we had written the last word in the matter of military conscription when we told you about the truce in our previous issue. But you never know what is going to happen next here. It seems that we misunderstood the Government, or they changed their mind, or something. At all events we were informed that those boys who were of military age would have to take the Government primary examinations at the end of the present school year [1936]. Accordingly, Fr. Sarjeant excused those boys from the regular classes to give them a chance to prepare themselves for the impending examinations.

That had been going on for a couple of weeks, when word was again received that the new Director General of Education, who had taken office only a short time before, inclined towards our opinion that the law should not be retroactive and that those boys who were already in high school when the law was passed should not be obliged to take Government primary examinations. That means simply that the matter is up in the air again, and there is no telling when a definite decision may be expected. (Madaras, 1936 p. 369)

A letter to the Jesuits from the Ministry of Education was dated 12 December, 1935:

According to the inquiry of principals of some of the schools





mentioned in our last decision dated, November 23, 1935, asking for a delay in which they might put themselves within the law, we shall ask the Directorate General of Conscription to postpone the call of students to the colors from these schools which pretend to be secondary, till the end of September, 1936 on the condition that the principal will guarantee the following: first to send all the students who have no primary certificate to take the primary examinations in June, 1936; second to send away any student who does not take this exam or who does not pass it; third to accept no one in the future who has not passed the primary exam and fourth to announce this in school catalogues. Directors of education must notify us of the names of all who are included in this temporary postponement when the faculties of the schools sent letters showing their approval of these conditions." The Jesuits chose not to reply to the letter, neither accepting nor refusing its terms. Instead, 17 Baghdad College students of military age took the primary school examination and passed it in June and September, 1936. By March, 1937, the crisis seemed to have passed. (Bashara, 1985, p. 147)

Al-Jamali reminded the Americans that the new law was not aimed in retaliation against them and praised their service to Iraq. He was determined, however, to preserve the "national culture". . . . The secondary schools, including Baghdad College, were only affected in the matter of faculty appointments in civic and Arabic studies. Nouri el-Said was satisfied with the outcome of the meeting and considered the issue settled. . . . And so ended the affair of the Education Law. The Iraqis had asserted their prerogative as guardians of national culture. . . . Before the issue was resolved, the Jesuits had held graduating exercises at Baghdad College on 23 June, 1940, at 6 in the evening: "They were a great success. The Delegate presided. The Director General of Education (ex-Minister, father of one of our boarders, the first civil official to assist at one of our ceremonies) spoke - and highly of the Fathers. The Director General of Public Instruction was present. All the bishops, most of the clergy, and 600 people saw our fifth graduation - 20 boys making the alumni total now 70.

Given the presence of both lay and clerical prominent Iraqis, including Sami Shawkat and Fadhil Al-Jamali, as well as representatives of other religious orders and members of all the major Christian sects, it looked as if the conduct of Jesuit relations had been a success. Baghdad College was there to

stay, until circumstances, in time, determined otherwise.  
(Bashara, 1985, p. 169-174)

From 1935 to 1940 the Jesuits confronted this serious problem for their educational mission. If they had not been so persistent and not received substantial concessions they would have had serious interference from the government in the running of their school. This would have greatly effected their enrollment, teaching staff and freedom of operation. Here is one final letter expressing the concern which was relayed by the rector Fr. Sarjeant to Fr. George Murphy, the Jesuit Province treasurer in Boston.

On 5/23/39 there appeared in the papers a notice that a new educational law might be passed. It will put Iraq in the class with Turkey and Persia. It forbids foreigners to run primary schools - thus killing nearly all the Catholic schools of the country especially the Carmelites of Baghdad who send us the larger part of the best trained of our boys. All private schools must submit to the Minister of education their annual budget one month before school opens. Without his permission they may not appoint mudirs (Prefects of Studies) nor teachers; nor change texts (which must be the same as the government); nor deviate from the government school holidays (therefore it would seem forbidden to have Sunday as the holiday and Christmas week would be out etc.) nor program, nor receive help from abroad. But the prize provision is the next. The government will send you all teachers of Arabic language, of all history and geography and civics and sociology; you will pay them the salary named by the government. That could swell our teaching payroll from about \$1,700 to \$7,200 per year; they will be responsible only to the Ministry; and they must teach in Arabic. What would that mean with regard to discipline? If your teachers came late or failed to turn in their marks or correct themes what could you do about it? (Letter #268 7/15/39 Sarjeant to G. Murphy)

### **The government curriculum of the thirties**

Public examinations for students of all schools were held at the end of the six primary years, then after the three intermediate years, and finally after the two secondary years. Their function was to find if a student was ready to pass on to higher education. Government certificates issued on the basis of passing grades in these examinations are the only passport from one school level to the next. A passing mark is 50% in the individual subject and



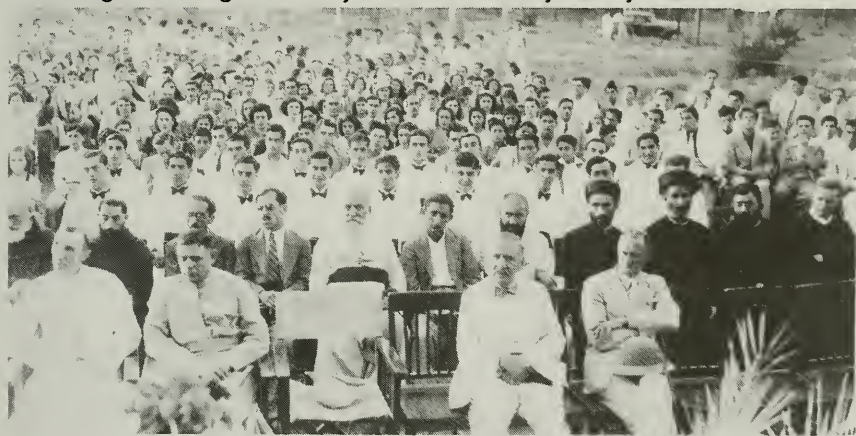
60% for the general average. One who fails three subjects or the general average must wait until the following June to take the exam again. Those failing one or two subjects may move ahead after passing a "conditional exam" in the summer. Results of the public examinations of the government secondary schools (including Intermediate) shows a dramatic decrease and is shown here by academic year and percent passed:

1930-31	91%
1940-41	73%
1950-51	66%
1952-53	51%
1954-55	48%
1956-57	58%



*Chaldean Patriarch and Fr. Madaras*

The important place of mathematics in the program was evident from the large proportion of class time spent on mathematics. Two of the seven subjects in the final terminal exams were mathematics. The exams covered the following subjects: Arabic and Religion (Islam), English, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and then Algebra-Trigonometry and Geometry-Analysis.



*1940 Baghdad College graduation ceremonies*

Higher education in Baghdad was behind most other countries due



to long Turkish rule and the following table indicates an enormous increase in the number of college graduates in Iraq during the 30 years intervening between 1921 and 1951. The number increased from 15 in 1921 to 1,091 in 1951. (The source for this table is the Iraq Ministry of Planning in the *Report on Education in Iraq for 1957-1958*. Baghdad: Republic Government Press, 1959, pp. 16, 26)

#### College Graduates, 1920-1958

College	21	31	41	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58
Law	15	10	129	621	564	351	183	158	180	147	164
Education		19	63	176	167	163	176	162	210	177	213
Engineering				59	42	50	55	53	61	68	82
Tahrir (Women)				64	77	87	74	101	114	72	102
Commerce				69	105	157	192	266	237	134	104
Arts & Sciences						56	61	82	136	167	148
Medical			38	46	24	44	50	67	78	51	75
Pharmacy			25	25	32	30	30	24	32	33	29
Police				31	25	24	35	24	24	15	20
Divinity					17	18	29	34	26	39	58
Agriculture							14	16	45	51	44
Nonacademic Institutions										28	88
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>1,091</b>	<b>1,053</b>	<b>980</b>	<b>899</b>	<b>987</b>	<b>1,143</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>1,127</b>

#### The Baghdad College curriculum of the thirties

The Baghdad College program followed completely the government syllabus. There were three intermediate years with a terminal degree followed by two more years of secondary studies. The Baghdad College program was quite different from the American system, but it never was the plan of the Jesuits to impose any program foreign to that of Iraq especially an American program. In fact even a cursory study of the curricula of the other New England Province schools shows few points of comparison with the Baghdad College curriculum.

One of the earliest Baghdad College students wrote about the curriculum and the complicated life he had committed himself to.

The curriculum was a full time one. Homework and quizzes were the order of the day. Penmanship, reading and elocution were daily requirements of Father Madaras. Having started in the sixth elementary class at Baghdad College and having progressed without previously having to take any Government exams, we were told that if we wished to go on for college studies we had to take three baccalaureate exams: the sixth





year elementary, the intermediate and the secondary exams. Since all the subjects for these exams were taught in Arabic in the Government schools, we had to prepare all the subjects we learned in English (algebra, trigonometry, history, geography, chemistry, physics, botany, zoology and social science), using the Arabic books in our free time.

So, at the end of my fourth year at Baghdad College I took the sixth year elementary exam and passed the intermediate exam at the end of that same summer. Then I took the final baccalaureate exam in June 1937. That September I was admitted to the Royal College of Medicine from which I graduated. (George Rahim '37)



*The ziggurat of Aqar-Quf, a favorite picnic spot for B.C. students*



## Experiences and influence of Jesuits in this decade

### Al Baghdadi

The early days of the mission were delightfully recorded in the pages of the periodical *Al Baghdadi*, which provided indispensable background material for understanding the Mission of Iraq. In its early days *Al Baghdadi* had to admonish its readers that Iraq was not in Persia, India or Africa, but was a country in its own right. The journal chronicles the progress of the school through the years from early suspicion by Muslim Mullahs to the position of esteem and affection it later enjoyed. The first 17 editions (1932-1936) were published in book form by The Jesuit Mission Press in 1936 in New York. The spirit of the newsletters is caught very nicely in the introduction.

In the first place it assumed that just as God loves a cheerful giver, so, too, He loves a cheerful missionary, and it treated the Baghdad venture, not as a lark, to be sure, but as a joyful adventure for the King of Kings. The Fathers were knights setting out on a jousting match to defend the honor of their Liege Lord, and although they felt that they were going to get many a hard knock and be unhorsed more than once, they looked forward to the contest with a glint in their eye, a smile on their lips, and a song in their hearts. They knew that when you go out to do battle for Christ, you do not go alone. And with Him they were ready for all things. If these young Americans appeared to be a bit debonair on the surface, deep down inside they were deadly serious about what they were doing. They did not, however, allow that seriousness to interfere with their sense of humor. And in this attention to the lighter side of things *Al Baghdadi* differed in a marked respect from its contemporaries.

A touch of humor makes the whole world kin, they say. *Al Baghdadi* contained more than just a touch, and it was not long before those who began to write back told us, among other things, that they felt that they knew the Fathers personally, even though they had never met them. Word was passed along from friend to friend that *Al Baghdadi* was free and well worth it, and it was not slow in growing.  
(Madaras, 1936, pp. 1-2)

The periodical was meant mostly to encourage financial and spiritual contributions from American benefactors and also to keep fellow Jesuits informed about the progress of the mission, as did the 17th century Jesuits in Canada. Baghdad College alumni

rarely saw the magazine, as Ramzi Y. Hermiz points out.

Most former students of Baghdad College and Al-Hikma University are familiar with their own school publications of *Al-Iraqi* and/or *Al-Hikma*. But probably, not so many from either school are familiar with, or maybe even heard of, *Al-Baghdadi*, nor as a result are aware of the key role that publication played in developing the support of the 'new school' needed from around the world. In the words of its own 'creator' (Father Madaras) the *Al-Baghdadi* was: "A spasmodic journal, published by the American Jesuits in Baghdad, appearing when mood and weather permit, its purpose being to keep our friends and the world in general informed as to what we are doing, how we are faring, and thus to sustain interest in the project entrusted to us by His Holiness, Pius XI." The *Al-Baghdadi* was written in the format of diary/letter, and was 'born' almost as soon as the ship carrying Fathers Rice and Madaras left New York on Feb. 9, 1932, on the way East. The diary/letter called *Al-Baghdadi* kept increasing in popularity after each new mailing, with general readers, seminaries, libraries, schools, and institutions in the U.S. and in Europe, such that by the 10th 'issue' the mailing list had reached 2000 locations. (Reunion VII Yearbook, 1990, p. 8)

All of the articles in the early years of his *Al-Baghdadi* newsletter were written by Fr. Madaras. Here follows a few examples of Fr. Madaras' wit and love for detail as he describes life in the thirties and the many unexpected things that caused the Jesuits' hair to gray as well as some pleasant surprises; humor, the lay-out of a typical Baghdad house, telephones, clocks, snakes, floods, Baghdad boils, trains, the praise of the local Imam, finding two dependable and capable workers who stayed with the Jesuits for many years and dust storms. Dust storms, by the way were a new experience for the Jesuits, all of whom were used to seeing snow in the winter, but now had to settle for a brown substitute - a dust storm.

All Jesuits had their own descriptions of such adventures, but Fr. Madaras preferred the student version below written as an English assignment to his own account giving a more scientific description of a dust storm. He supplied the intricate statistical details that he found so interesting, enthusiastic even in the presence of glassy-eyed stares from his numbed hearers. Some people who took an interest in Catholic enterprises, however, did not comprehend the humor that came with these homey descriptions of life among the Jesuits. A passage follows about a



rather humorless Boston lady visiting the Jesuit Mission Office who was not sure that humor was the proper way to God.

### Missionaries and humor

A woman came to us one day with a letter she had received from some missionary who, of course, was begging for funds. In the course of his letter he happened to mention that he was "as busy as a one-eyed cat in a bird store". That touch of humor made the good woman suspicious; no *bona fide* missionary, she felt, would talk like that, and she concluded that he must be a fraud. She had come to us apparently to have her suspicions confirmed. Well, we looked his name up in the Catholic Directory and we found him to be perfectly genuine. As we remember it, the woman was almost sorry.

Now, that woman's attitude illustrates a popular misconception; the impression has somehow got abroad that missionaries have no sense of humor, or at least that they ought to have little. Well, if missionaries weren't humorists, they wouldn't hold out on the missions very long, as our fellow Jesuit, Richard Welfle, down in India remarked in a recent issue of *Catholic Missions*. As a consequence of the popular idea that the missionary is a gaunt individual with long beard and solemn, hollow eyes containing a far-away look, a man who speaks in sad, sepulchral tones and never writes back home except to tell of hardships and the wonders he could do with five dollars, most of your missionaries who write for the magazines are a bit chary about saying anything that is not redolent of piety and edification, anything that departs from the "trek across the veldt" or the "steaming jungle" tradition. (Madaras, 1936, p. 157)



*Friendly neighbors and one uncertain*

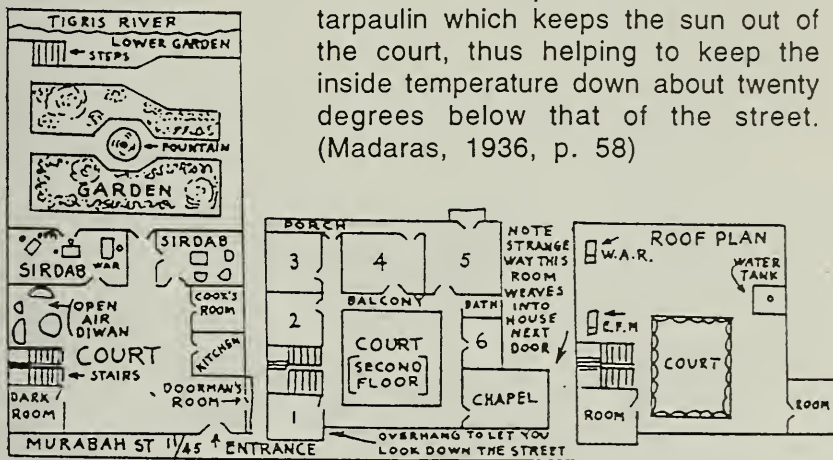


## The First Jesuit residence

We have commissioned our staff artist to draw a plan of our domicile. He has prepared a rough sketch, not exactly according to scale, but it will serve to give you an idea of the place where we work and play and dream our dreams . . . . To the extreme left you have the ground floor. The rooms are disposed around the open court, only two of them being suitable for living purposes. Windows open either on the court, or on the back or front: there are none on either side, since the neighbors' houses are there. The open air court mounts right up to the sky as far as you care to go. The second floor has seven rooms: we have numbered six of them to help you count. The two rooms on the roof are for the purpose of storing bedding during the day.

### Open House

Notice the unique fashion in which our artist has depicted the canvas tarpaulin which keeps the sun out of the court, thus helping to keep the inside temperature down about twenty degrees below that of the street. (Madaras, 1936, p. 58)



## Telephones

January 26th [1936] was a historical day in the life of the school. It was then that the first call came in on our newly installed telephone, for which we had been waiting patiently many months. We mean the telephone, not the call. In case you should wish to call us up, our number is Shamal 62. Don't forget this number, for you will have a difficult time finding us in the phone book. Although instructions had been given to list us under "Jesuit Residence", we found after a long search that we had been placed under "William", that being Fr. Rice's first name. The operators here are men, and their occasional use of seemingly affectionate language may possibly be explained on the score of oriental exuberance. (Madaras, 1936 p. 17)

### The Muslims of Adhamyah

Shortly after we moved to Sulaikh we heard that the Imam of Adhimyah, a nearby village, addressed his congregation in the great mosque and expressed his pleasure that Baghdad College had settled in the neighborhood. As we had been uncertain how our Muslim neighbors would take to a Christian school in their midst, this news was reassuring. Later Fr. Coffey paid the Imam a visit and was cordially received and entertained. The Imam in his turn called to see the school and appeared impressed by what he saw, not least by the chapel, concerning which he asked many questions. (Madaras, 1936, p. 299)

### Youssef and Zieya

Two buses require two chauffeurs, and we have two that were sent to us from Heaven. Youssef and Zieya are their names, which is the local version of Joseph and Isaiah. They are brothers, somewhere in their late thirties, both with years of experience in town and desert driving, good-natured, reliable, honest, hard working. Besides driving the buses, they both serve table, wash dishes, run the boys' canteen, and do anything else they are told to do. Youssef always has a merry



*Youssef and Fr. Madaras*

twinkle in his eye. He can read and write Arabic, Chaldean, and English, and that is enough to establish him in his position as Zieya's boss. He does practically all the buying, for he is a demon at driving a bargain, and seems to know all the shopkeepers and traffic policemen in the city.

He has learned to serve Mass, too, which he does each morning to the apparent envy of our other Catholic workmen,



all of whom attend Mass each day. Zieya is the imperturbable, wearing for the most part a grave and dignified look whose authenticity we have always suspected. This grand manner he affects particularly when he is serving table, and we are sure that the head-waiter of the Waldorf Astoria could not give him any pointers on this score. Zieya and Youssef swear that they will never leave us. For our part, we shall never let them go. (Madaras, 1936, p. 248)

### **The haunted clock**

We told you last time that we had heard our house was haunted. Local legend reported the particular room responsible as being that occupied by Fr. Merrick. We do not lightly lend credence to such statements, but one day when the chime clock was brought up from downstairs and hung outside Fr. Merrick's room, it began striking 13 for each hour. Our attitude towards the number 13 has always been one of total disregard, but when things like that begin to happen, who can be complete master of his feelings, especially when you wake up at four in the morning to hear the dismal strokes struck out with slow deliberation?

Fr. Madaras was frankly incredulous as to the facts and hinted that the Fathers who claimed to have heard the fateful number were either dreaming or simply could not count. But then it was learned that the doubting Father had himself repaired the clock only the day before. He took the clock down and restored a missing part. The clock's conduct has been exemplary ever since. (Madaras, 1936, p. 257)

### **Snakes of Eden**

We are happy to report that we have found hundreds of snakes, but not in the house; they are decent enough to confine themselves to the gardens of our new property. We have quite a sizable collection now, and whenever one of the workmen happens to kill another (snake), he brings it to us full of pride, although a bit puzzled concerning our desire to keep dead snakes. One specimen was brought in a few days ago that measured 54 inches. It was coal black and Toby calmly informed us that you die in 30 seconds after being bitten by it.

We have heard similar dreaded predictions with regard to the scorpions that go scurrying around the house at certain seasons of the year, but we have yet to hear of anyone dying from a bite. Still, we're not taking any unnecessary chances. Further research into the antecedents of the 54 inch snake reveals that its name is the European whip snake. In fact, of



the 25 species of snake found in Iraq, only six are poisonous. (Madaras, 1936, p. 258)

### **The Angry Tigris**

The Tigris, referred to above, refuses to allow itself to be dismissed with such passing mention. This year, on February 19 to be exact, it threw something of a scare into us and won for the boys an unexpected holiday. Within the space of a few days it had risen something like 15 feet, and on the morning of the 19th we found it within a couple of feet of the top of the dike which rises some eight feet above the level of our own front yard. We saw that if it should begin coming over the dike, our house would be standing in eight feet of water. Our concern therefore was easy to understand. (Madaras, 1936, p. 260)



*One of the seven bridges across the Tigris on a calm day*

### **Dust storms (student version)**

This is the story about dust storm. If you see in our country a thing you do not see it only in a little part of world that it is the dust storm. Every three weeks or 1 month or 2 days you see all the sky is covered by the dust storm, and the sky all change from the blue to the yellow. The wind becomes high. The mother at home shuts the windows. Sometimes the strong wind with the storm breaks the glasses of the windows. When it is storm too bad we cannot breath well and we cannot open our eyes because the dust enters in our eyes and they become sick.

And when the dust comes you will see that all the things and rooms are covered with the dust. After if you will go away in the street you cant see a man or cars about 4 yards. And many of cars they make accident. You could not see anybody passing on the street every one went to his house and hide himself into the room. And this dust very bad for the man whom are sick in the bed. If we close the door and the window we must open the



light like the night. After the storm they shine the sun.

My parents was sweeping the house with a brooms and when they finished they cleaned the glasses and the cups and the jar and the water filter till they finished. Then they cleaned the carpets and they swap the room till they finished all the house. The little boys and the girls come out of their room and wash their faces and hand and some of them swam in the bath room in order to get clean. After that the dust came another time. Always the dust comes in place of coming rain. Comes dust. It is not good for the flowers and other things. Not only for the flowers but for the persons also. My friend, if they came in your country like this? (Madaras, 1936, p. 151)

### **Dust storms (Fr. Madaras version)**

On the evening of March 30, 1935 occurred Iraq's worst dust storm in its history, 100 people dying because of it. Baghdad lost one of its pontoon bridges and traffic came to a halt. It started during the Saturday morning classes and lasted most of the day. Shutting the windows did not help much but classes were finished. The atmosphere was an orange hue and the velocity of the wind reached 70 mph.

When the Fathers came up to dinner after the evening Litanies, they were all such a wild-looking sight that it was difficult to preserve a becoming gravity during the saying of grace. Meanwhile the lights were going on and off, and about 10 o'clock that night stopped altogether. We had no electricity for the next 20 hours.

Next morning the house, inside and out, was a sad sight. In our courtyard, which contains something like 2500 square feet, we swept up 415 pounds of dust. Fr. Merrick figured it out to three decimals and found it amounted to 2,328.945 tons per square mile. In Fr. Rice's room the fall was at the rate of 524 tons per square mile. Last summer's dust storm in America gave Chicago 75 tons per square mile, so Chicagoans at least will be able to appreciate how much dust we really had.

The dust that fell on each square mile of Baghdad would make a column one foot square and nearly two miles high. Send that to Collier's for us (they might not take our word) and let us have the five dollars they give you for this piece of information. And the next time mother complains about the difficulties of keeping the house clean, just ask her jocosely how she would like to live in Baghdad.

(Madaras, 1936, p. 262)



### **Baghdad boil**

Our early readers are not unacquainted with the Baghdad boil, for we told about the one which Father Madaras had on his left hand about two years ago. Since then we have garnered further information about it which may not be uninteresting to our medical-minded readers. Our latest informant is none other than Dr. Kennedy, of the Royal College of Medicine of Iraq. What lends the matter added interest now is the fact that Fr. Coffey has taken it on the chin (by it we mean the boil) and Fr. Wand on the back of the right hand. It will soon be a year now that they blossomed out with the said adornment, and then they may hope to be relieved of their affliction.

(Madaras, 1936, p. 267)

### **Train ride**

We had second-class tickets, but because of our failure to make reservations in time (the reason behind that is another story in its own right), we had to take our places in the third-class coach. The conductor graciously cleared the benches of Arabs in order that we might each have a seat to ourselves, but we had to sit upright all night, all except Mr. Casey, who followed the example of some of the natives and climbed up into the luggage rack, where he slept peacefully until morning.

(Madaras, 1936, p. 295)

### **Cassocks**

Clerical collar and a black suit was the customary garb of American priests but cassocks (at least their predecessor the "dishdash") were invented in Baghdad so these were preferred by the Jesuits. Due to Fr. Madaras' facility at striking a bargain the Jesuit cassock was made of khaki colored cloth which cost 25 cents a yard and the finished cassock cost a mere \$1.75. This color was preferable to the black cassocks most priests wore because they were cooler in the summer and also the accumulation of Baghdad dust, not to mention classroom chalk, was not apparent on them.

After the people got used to seeing the Baghdad Jesuits wearing them Syrian priests adopted this style. It was odd that it was called a "Jesuit cassock" since St. Ignatius did not want Jesuits to have a distinctive garb. All Jesuits changed from winter black to summer khaki on the same day in March and back again on a fixed day in November. The students would watch the Jesuit residence for the first man out to see if spring had come or if winter had started.

Like the early Jesuit explorers, the Baghdad Jesuits were inveterate writers and related many details of their ordinary day.



Some writers were more graphic and interesting than others, but officials such as superiors and treasurers were frequent correspondents. There were always unexpected events which upset schedules such as the death of a king. Here is a letter from the superior Fr. Francis Sarjeant to Fr. George Murphy, the Jesuit Province treasurer in Boston. It is followed by a letter in which Fr. Hussey describes his arrival in Baghdad in August of 1938 and records some of his first impressions.

The King [Ghazi] was killed in an automobile accident [early on Tuesday, 4/4/39]. The news was not released until about eight or nine on Tuesday morning after our boys had begun classes. A telephone call from a friend in the city advised us to get the boys home while the going was good. We went down town in the small car to see that everything was all right. On the way we were stopped once ourselves by wailing groups trotting towards the royal palace. But we got through all right. We returned and sent the boys down on the buses. As we are four miles north of the city and there is only one good road leading through the middle of the city to the section at the south where many of our boys live, at times when there is any possibility of trouble in the city, we are obliged to rush them through when we can, lest they be cut off and stranded at the school. (Letter #211 4/19/39 Fr. Sarjeant to Fr. Murphy)

## Arrival

When I arrived in Baghdad Fr. Miff met us at the Nairn bus station and hustled us through customs to an Arabana. Though taxis were available, the horse and carriage gave us a leisurely view of a city that was to become so much a part of our lives. Fr. Miff was born and raised in Malta before migrating to California where he eventually entered the Jesuits. He was a gracious, hard-working priest, genial and friendly to all and yet a strict and well organized teacher. His native Malta must have had much influence from the Muslim northern Africa.

Greeting us on our arrival at Sulaikh (northern quarter of Baghdad) was the Superior of the Baghdad Mission, Fr. William Rice, an elderly corpulent, gentle person. He had a difficult task. He had been lifted from being rector of our Jesuit Novitiate in the glorious green of the Berkshires in Massachusetts, to be dropped into the sandy, dry, largely barren plains of Iraq. (Fr. Hussey)

### A special Sulaikh family

The Jesuits found their neighbors to be wonderful people and frequently became acquainted with them through their children who would wander onto the property to use the fields and courts. Fr. LaBran has fond memories of one such family, and his comments are introduced by an admiring son.

During the war between Egypt and the West over the Suez Canal in 1956, the rough winds of political change started to move all over the Arab world. In Baghdad, there were demonstrations and rumors that the army would move against the government. In light of this situation, one of the visitors to our home asked my father if he had any weapons at home or if he carried a weapon on his person. To my amazement my father put his hand in his pocket, took out a rosary and replied: "Yes, I do carry a weapon, the most effective weapon in the world." I wondered if our Moslem friend understood what he meant.

On 14 July, 1958, the day of the revolution, my father and another General were brought to the Minister of defense for detention, to be later removed to prison. They were put in an army truck escorted by army officers who were at one time under their command, but had later joined the opposite camp. The mob in the streets leading to the ministry of defense attacked the truck. But then, one of the escorting officers opened fire over the heads of the mob and dispersed it. My father recounted this episode to four Jesuits who were visiting our home after his release. One of the Jesuits asked him how he had felt about this close call, being attacked by an angry mob. My father's answer was, "Father, I knew nothing would happen to me that day because I had not finished my Novena of the nine First Fridays. I had just finished the eighth Friday the week before, so I had the feeling my time had not yet come." (Wael Hindo, B.C. '60. A.H. '64)



*"The play's the thing..."*





Ephraim Hindo and his wife Laila Hindo I met very early in my years at Baghdad. They were both very beautiful people from very devout Syrian Catholic families. I realized very quickly that these were very special people. When I met Ephraim he was in the service of the Iraqi government, eventually promoted to the rank of General, thereby becoming the highest ranking Christian in the Iraqi army. His brother Joseph was the Syrian Archbishop of Baghdad. The Hindo family was very renowned. I used to talk to Ephraim a lot and we became very close friends right from the very beginning. The thing that impressed me about him was that he would quote Scripture, the Old Testament and the New Testament, in a very powerful way, nothing ostentatious but I thought a very human way of communicating to me what life meant to him.

Laila would be at Mass at our chapel every morning and Ephraim would come as often as he could when he wasn't off on maneuvers. Those were the days when people had to fast from midnight before they received the Eucharist and one day Ephraim came about 5:00 p.m. after fasting all day knowing he'd be returning to Baghdad and could receive at our college. The whole family received the Eucharist very reverently and very profoundly.

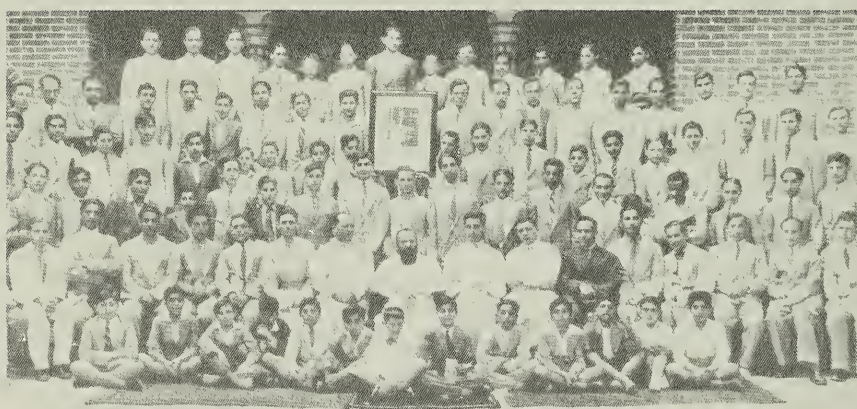
The Hindo house was like Grand Central Station for all of Sulaikh; everyone went in and out of there all the time. The boys attended Baghdad College and Walid and I became very friendly. My support of Walid is, I think, the main reason why I became so close to the whole family. In July of 1958, it was announced early one morning over the radio that there had been a revolution. King Faisal, who had visited my own classroom just two months previously, had been assassinated. General Hindo was out on maneuvers and was captured by three of his own officers who asked him, "Are you with us, or against us?" Ephraim raised his arms up under the three guns and proclaimed, "I took my oath to the King and I cannot go against him." They brought him into Baghdad where he was imprisoned.

Over the radio they gave a list of who had been killed in the uprising. The Hindo family was relieved to hear that Ephraim was alive but being detained. To prove this to the family and to all Christians, the oldest son Walid was allowed to go down to the prison to see his father. He would bring food to him and return with Ephraim's clothing so Laila could wash them. Ephraim became an inspiration to everyone because while imprisoned, he prayed fervently, holding the rosary and

crucifix in his hands. His wife Laila was very heroic and endured the fact that the people who had flooded her home now stayed away.

Eventually he was released from the jail and came back to the college where he prostrated himself before Our Lady. The family later gave a beautiful crown for Our Lady in gratitude to God for sparing his life. General Ephraim Hindo was a great man of God who never gave up faith, hope or love.

General Hindo was offered to be ambassador of Iraqi government for the Vatican. To this offer he said all that I want is my wife and family and the Church. Ephraim Hindo chose the road less traveled by the way of the Cross and for him and for us all who admired and loved him this has made all the difference. Each year since 1958 I have been giving the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius to students of The College of the Holy Cross four times each year. Each time I use this man as an example of what life is really about. (Fr. LaBran)



*The first student body: 1933 picture taken from the 1990 Reunion Yearbook*



## Chapter 4

# Against All Odds, Coming of Age in the Forties



*Charity bears all things, believes all things,  
hopes all things, endures all things.  
1 Corinthians XIII: 7*

### Summary: Baghdad College during this decade

After their first hectic decade the Jesuits faced another challenge with the Rashid (Rasheed) Ali Coup of Spring 1941 when World War II spilled over into Iraq. Once the initial danger to Baghdad College had passed there was a surprisingly sharp increase in enrollment, especially among Muslims, due in some part, to the evident persistence of the Jesuits who were not frightened away by the war. This increase in the size of the student body called for increasing the size of faculty and a greater expansion in classroom buildings and the boarding school. Early in the forties the *Al Iraqi* yearbook blossomed and later there were some minor changes in the curriculum. During this time there were many colorful Jesuit experiences and their influence on the Baghdad community became more apparent.

The superiors of the mission and rector of Baghdad College during this decade included Fr. Sarjeant (38-45) and Fr. Madaras (45-52). The principals (mudeer) were Fr. Devenny (40-42) and Fr. Connell (43-52). Fr. Quinn and Fr. Kelly were the assistant principals (muawin). Jesuit officials are not elected by any form of ballot and are not allowed to ambition an office, so these men were all appointed by the New England Provincial. This

would have been done on the advice of the four province consultors in Boston and the four mission consultors who lived on the mission. In fact the latter group usually would have the greater input.

To a Muslim country in the early forties, plagued by the memory of four centuries of Turkish domination, jealous of its recent independence and sensitive to its own internal weaknesses, the Jesuits constituted a triple threat: being all at once Americans, Catholics and Jesuits. There was a wave of propaganda current in the Middle East at the time which seemed to justify the suspicions of Iraqi officials on all three scores. The war years were the turning point. When hostilities reached the Mediterranean area, the sons of upper-class Muslims for whom education abroad was traditional, were compelled to remain in Iraq. Several of the more venturesome families of this class registered their boys at Baghdad College as a somewhat desperate experiment. The boys became enthusiastic propagandists for the school, familiarity bred respect and knowledge which dissipated suspicion and the American Jesuit Fathers actually became popular. Soon there were Cabinet Ministers, Deputies in Parliament and tribal chieftains all wanting to register their sons or nephews in the school. A partial list of sons of prominent Iraqi citizens is found in Appendix D.

### **The Rashid Ali Coup of Spring 1941**

Near the beginning of the Second World War old Iraqi political rivalries took on an Axis-Ally coloring in World War II. Nouri el-Said (Saeed), the Prime Minister, and the Regent were pro-English; their opponents turned to the Axis. Turkey had managed to remain neutral, and Rashid Ali's visit to Turkey had convinced him this was the track to take. In addition, he was housing the Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj al-Ameen al-Husayni, who was being chased by the English for his anti-British activities in Palestine. Neutrality, of course, was impossible.

In her book *The Modern History of Iraq*, Phebe Marr narrates the story of what led to the "second British occupation". Former Prime Minister Rashid (Rasheed) Ali was asked by Nouri el-Said to form a new cabinet since Nouri was stepping down from that post. He did and it became quite clear to the British that his interests were more in sympathy with Iraqi nationalism than what would be useful for the British. Britain offered the Regent Abdullah two choices: keep Rashid Ali or retain Britain's friendship - but not both. The Regent's consequent actions made it necessary for Rashid Ali to act outside the constitutional system, and this





became known as *The Rashid Ali Coup*. He deposed the Regent, appointed another and then formed a new cabinet. Holding out the bait of recognition, the British requested permission to land troops in Basra. Rashid Ali still wished to find a compromise and agreed on April 17 to British troops landing in Basra, but then found he could not contain them. Soon the British far from recognizing the regime moved their troops through Iraq. Rashid (Rasheed) Ali replied by surrounding the British air base at Habbaniyah. The British reacted, and between their air force at Habbaniyah and a column of the Arab Legion from Transjordan, they soon took affairs back in hand. By the end of May, Rashid Ali was going into exile while the Regent and Nouri el-Said were returning. Phebe Marr relates the consequences both immediate and long range.

The rest of the story is soon told. The battle was not fought on the ground but in the air. Within hours, the RAF had destroyed twenty five of Iraq's forty planes. Taken by surprise, the Iraqi army withdrew to Fallujah, destroying the Euphrates dams and flooding the area. This delayed the British advance but hardly stopped it. In the meantime, British reinforcements began to stream in from Jordan, including contingents from Glubb Pasha's Arab Legion. Fallujah was captured on 19 May and the way lay open to Baghdad. The government collapsed shortly. On 29 May, as British columns approached Baghdad, the four highest officers escaped to Iran, where they were soon joined by Rashid Ali.

Thus ended the most serious attempt since the 1920 revolt to sever the British tie and to unseat the regime they had established. The crisis had profound repercussions for the future; all the participants paid a price sooner or later. Many supporters of Rashid Ali were executed or imprisoned; suspected sympathizers were dismissed or confined in camps. Retribution to the Regent and Nouri came later, in 1958. The British also paid at this later date with the fall of the regime they had done so much to foster. Those who were executed for precipitating the events of 1941 were regarded as martyrs by much of the army and the Iraqi population. The young officers who overthrew the regime in 1958 believed they were but completing the task left unfinished in 1941.

(Marr, 1985, pp. 85-86)

Rashid Ali's home was across the street from the Jesuits which has been mentioned earlier regarding his 1936 request of the Jesuits to give a section of their newly purchased land to the city

for a police station. In spite of the fact that there was a large contingent of Iraqi soldiers in the vicinity during the 60 days the Jesuits never endured any harassment. During these dangerous two months when British subjects and Americans were being evacuated from Iraq, the fact that the Jesuits made no effort to depart but went about business as usual impressed the Iraqi government officials. It was evident in the noticeable change in enrollment the following September. After that sons of prime ministers, governors, sheiks, and professional men accepted the discipline and the learning imparted by the Jesuits. Nevertheless this 60-day war had put the Jesuits in a precarious position and Edmund Walsh, S.J., attempted to find out what he could and he sent this telegram to concerned Jesuit superiors in Boston.

WESTERN UNION                      1941 JUNE              4 PM 12 04  
 BAG 73 73 DL=WASHINGTON DC  
 4 1108A REV JAMES DOLAN= 300 NEWBURY ST=  
 STATE DEPARTMENT REPORTS THIS MORNING FOLLOWING CABLE  
 FROM AMERICAN MINISTER BAGHDAD "AMERICAN JESUITS SAFE  
 AS FOLLOWS SARGEANT, MERRICK, MADARAS, DEVINNEY, GOOKIN,  
 CRONIN, FENNELL, MCCARTHY, ARMITAGE, WHITE, SHEEHAN AND  
 MAHAN. SHEA ASSUMED SAFE AT BASRA". THIS MEANS ALL  
 SEEM SAFE BUT NO MENTION IN MINISTERS TELEGRAM OF MIFSUD  
 ALTHOUGH THAT MEANS NOTHING SINCE HE IS NOT AN AMERICAN  
 CITIZEN AND WOULD NOT BE INCLUDED IN AMERICAN LIST TO STATE  
 DEPARTMENT.  
 WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED = EDMUND WALSH.

There was very little mentioned about the Rashid Ali coup in the correspondence between the superiors in Iraq and in America. The following report of the superior, however, throws some light on some of the anxieties caused during these difficult days noting their trust lay more in their Iraqi neighbors than any help from the American Embassy.

The American Legation had warned several times that Iraq might enter the war at any moment and by urging the return of all American subjects to the U.S.A. They had washed their hands of us, in strict legality. However plans were made for British and American subjects to take refuge in the event of trouble in the Legation or the British Embassy. It was decided that we would not go but would send chaplains to each place and we were to be informed if there was a need of a chaplain at Habbaniyah at the outbreak of hostilities. The atmosphere was thus charged with apprehension until the fateful day in May



when the storm broke. Fr. Mifsud, as a British subject was taken into custody but released after a week at the insistence of the Apostolic Delegate. Throughout the month of war there was never any question of disorder in our neighborhood. The house and headquarters of Rashid Ali were beside us on the north and the communications office of his government beside us on the south. We were therefore at the heart of his headquarters. While we were unmolested by the unruly crowds, it was important for us not to come to the notice of our neighbors. What had been begun had to be finished and our 1500 foot wall all through this nerve-racking month went steadily up. Class had stopped in the beginning of May and things were still in too great a turmoil at the beginning of June, when the little war had finished, to resume class, to have examinations, or to run graduation. Boys were passed or failed on their marks of the previous months. The government examinations were postponed until September. (Letter of Fr. Sarjeant: N.E. Province Archives file #510)



*Weekly salute to the flag*

## **The expansion of Baghdad College during this decade**

### **Enrollment**

The immediate effect of student travel restrictions caused by the April-May war and also of the composed Jesuit reaction in the face of the risks involved was a sudden increase in the Muslim enrollment as well as an increase in the number of boarding students. Families who, for want of adequate educational facilities at home, had traditionally sent their sons elsewhere, now felt it wiser to keep them close at hand while hostilities lasted. These increases are evident in the following table. The 1942 entering class almost doubled, and between 1938 and 1945 the total enrollment quadrupled while the number of boarders tripled.



## Baghdad College Enrollment Statistics 1932-1945

	'32	'33	'34	'35	'36	'37	'38	'39	'40	'41	'42	'43	'44	'45
Chaldean	59	65	54	54	35	29	29	36	50	55	72	90	118	150
Syrian	17	21	34	33	16	17	25	29	34	35	40	44	48	52
Other	23	22	29	39	28	38	48	62	72	60	78	87	104	128
Muslim	4	4	11	6	7	4	3	12	15	29	55	61	72	89
Total	103	112	128	132	86	88	105	139	171	179	245	282	342	419
Boarders							23	23	37	41	48	60	68	68

**Construction in the forties**

The war had halted the building program but the increased enrollment in both the school and in the boarding section led to overcrowded conditions, so that the College was obliged to refuse some qualified applicants for lack of space. The admissions standards were kept high in order to use the precious resources as effectively as possible. The conviction prevailed that the work was so vitally important for the Church in Iraq and the resources so slim that only potential leaders could be chosen. Students' competence in two languages was presumed: in English to pass the school exams and in Arabic to pass the government exams. This was more than some students could handle, so they had to be turned away.

Although the school originally was planned to accommodate only 200 students (there being 7 classrooms, with 30 students to a class), and the dormitory and other facilities only 30 boarders, by the fall of 1945 over 425 students were enrolled in the school, of whom 70 were boarders. This overcrowding was solved by dividing the "assembly hall" into three classrooms, by building a one-story annex of six classrooms, and by renting two houses in the immediate neighborhood for the overflow of faculty members and for boarding students.

In 1945 Fr. Madaras wrote an account of the Baghdad Mission to Cardinal Tisserant in Rome requesting personnel as well as financial aid so that the mission could expand and capitalize on its current dominant position in education. This request fell on deaf ears, but in the letter he mentioned that an anonymous American

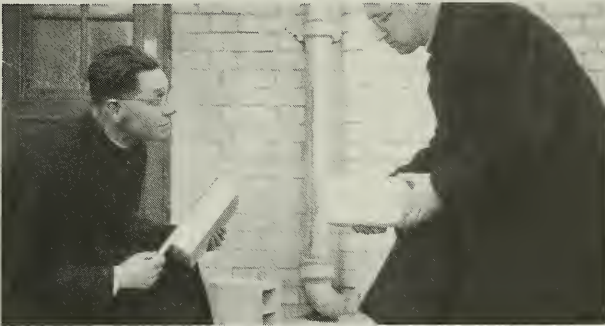
benefactress had given money making possible the classroom and administration building, as well as some of the buildings that followed. A combined student dormitory and a faculty residence had gone up due to the benefaction of this same lady. Benefactors could not get over the fact that the first building cost a mere \$50,000.





## The architects

The growth of the physical plant kept pace with the school's expanding prestige, but the problem of providing adequate laboratory, library, and other necessary facilities for the ever-growing upper classes was not easily solved. Even during the war, a classroom annex was constructed to bring the number to six buildings completed - including two dormitories. Fr. Madaras and Fr. Guay were the architects, contractors and clerk-of-the-works for the Rice Memorial science building. Fr. Guay blueprinted every detail of construction beginning with the underground drains to the astronomy observatory that tops the central tower. It was built following the Arabic architectural pattern begun by Fr. Rice who started constructing the buildings in 1937. This science building was second to none in its category of secondary science buildings throughout the Middle East, for its ample space, its large classrooms and laboratories, its two sloped classrooms and its bright cheerful environment.



*Getting the best brick*



*1940 graduation ceremony with Dr. Sami Shawkett & Dr. Fadhil Jamali*

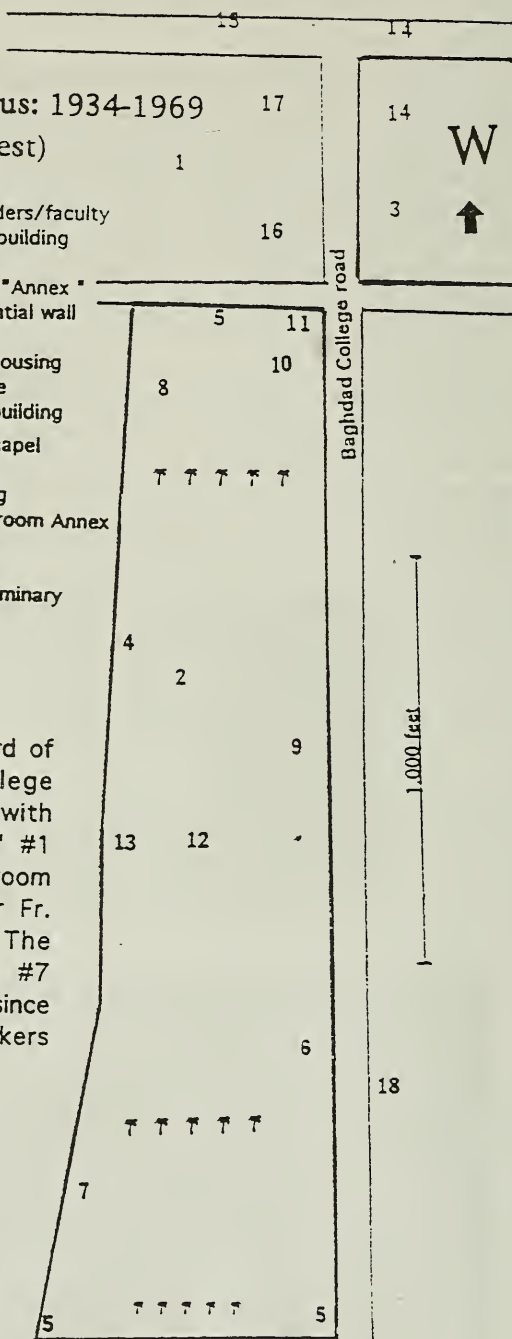


# Baghdad College campus: 1934-1969 (looking west)



- 1 1934 *Old house* boarders/faculty
- 2 1938 Administration building
- 3 1939 Boarding house
- 4 1940 First classroom "Annex "
- 5 1941 The circumferential wall
- 6 1942 Canteen
- 7 1945 B.C. Workmen housing
- 8 1949 Jesuit Residence
- 9 1951 *Rice* Science building
- 10 1953 Sacred Heart Chapel
- 11 1953 Cemetery
- 12 1954 *Cronin* building
- 13 1955 *Madaras* classroom Annex
- 14 Pump house and garage
- 15 Hikmat Sulayman house
- 16 Bacose house - minor seminary
- 17 Rachid Ali house
- 18 Police station

A chronological record of the Baghdad College buildings, starting with the first "old house" #1 until the last classroom building named after Fr. Madaras, #13. The workmen's housing #7 was a large complex since 24 families of workers lived on the property.



**"Mens sana in corpore sano"** {a sound mind in a sound body}

Baghdad College continued to pay special attention to the preparation for government intermediate and secondary examinations. To this end teachers required that its students prepare for the following day's classes by at least 2 hours of homework. Underlying all this was taught reverence for God, reverence for parents, and reverence for the State. History afforded striking confirmation of the need for a God-centered education.

Sports were seen as a means of learning self-control as well as a school of sociability and cooperation. From his involvement in sports, the student learned to respect official decisions, a lesson he carried with him in his private and public life. Sports are a very useful instrument of training in ethical values. One of the many mottoes attributed to Baghdad College concerned athletics: "We should pray for a sound mind in a sound body." *Mens sana in corpore sano*. The Roman poet Juvenal had written this in the second century in his tenth Satire (Line 80), the Jesuits simply borrowed it from him.

From the beginning the school had followed the policy of accepting new students only in the first high class, because students who wished to transfer from other schools into the upper classes were usually below standard, particularly in the English language. This was a very plausible reason for the policy since the first year introduced the student to the world of classes in English so that the difficult courses which came later would proceed more smoothly. All subjects at Baghdad College were taught in English, with the exception of history, geography, and the Arabic language, which the Government Educational Law of 1940 stated must be taught in Arabic by teachers appointed by the Iraq Government.

The third and fifth year students finished class at the end of April, about a month earlier than the others, so that they could study for their all-important government exams in early June. To facilitate this exercise special classes in Arabic were given in the then empty classrooms at Baghdad College, so the students went into the exams knowing how to confront the science and mathematics problems in Arabic as well as in English.

### **Composition of the Student Body**

In the forties the enrollment quadrupled from 139 to 556 and then doubled again before the Jesuits were expelled. The chart below displays some interesting trends. In its last year, 1968-69, the student population of Baghdad College was half Muslim and half Christian and the following enrollment table shows the



gradual increase in the proportion of Muslims to Christians (while both were increasing in absolute numbers). As has been seen already the most dramatic increase for all came in 1941.



*The courageous builders in precarious circumstances*

**Baghdad College enrollment data** according to religion:

The following table illustrates the growth of the student body over the years distributed according to rite {**Chaldean, Syrian, Armenian Catholic, Greek Catholic, Latin Catholic**} and religion [**Armenian Orthodox, Other Orthodox, Muslims and Jews**]. During the years between 1946 and 1952 all **Catholics** were counted together without distinguishing the rite.

These statistics were gleaned from papers in the Jesuit Archives at Campion Center in Weston, MA. Some data were in letters, some were in reports to the Provincial, but not all data were not available since many papers had been lost after the expulsion.





## Baghdad College Enrollment data according to religion

	Chal	Syr	AC	Gr	Lat	AO	OO	Mus	J	Tot
'32	59	17	5	3	4	3	3	4	4	103
'33	65	21	7	3	6	4	1	4	1	112
'34	54	34	10	7	6	4	0	11	2	128
'35	54	33	9	7	10	4	3	6	6	132
'36	35	16	5	5	10	3	2	7	3	86
'37	29	17	7	6	14	6	2	4	4	88
'38	29	25	6	5	18	12	4	3	3	105
'39	36	29	6	2	18	15	8	12	13	139
'40	50	34	7	3	22	19	6	15	15	171
'41	55	35	11	2	18	14	5	29	10	179
'42	72	40	12	2	25	28	5	55	6	245
'43	90	44	18	0	26	27	10	61	6	282
'44	118	48	19	2	28	32	17	72	5	342
'45	150	52	19	3	26	58	17	89	4	419

## Catholics

							OO	Mus	J	Tot
'46	259						83	95	3	440
'47	264						99	110	4	477
'48	260						115	115	2	492
'49	251	not available					127	129	2	509
'50	257						139	157	3	556
'51	276						146	197	2	621
'52	289						156	248	5	683

	Chal	Syr	AC	Gr	Lat	AO	OO	Mus	J	Tot
'53	197	54	20	5	20	108	57	259	5	725
'54	207	55	19	7	19	101	52	264	3	727
'55	203	65	16	5	19	84	59	269	3	723
'56	196	59	14	6	19	86	57	263	5	705
'57		not available							est.	733
'58	218	70	14	7	15	89	55	285	7	760
'59	213	63	12	7	12	82	45	297	7	748
'60	193	65	10	5	9	94	55	357	9	797
'61	219	81	12	9	15	92	58	374	11	871
'62	255	80	10	12	21	51	70	426	8	933
'63	276	74	8	13	26	66	49	461	7	980
'64	299	83	11	14	24	65	63	472	5	1036
'65	323	75	11	12	20	63	75	514	5	1097
'66	307	79	9	7	16	59	81	522	3	1083
'67	264	68	13	7	12	55	88	509	2	1018
'68		not available							est.	1000

Chal Syr AC Gr Lat AO OO Mus J Tot

Key: {Catholic rite} and [Religion]: Tot = total number.

{Chaldean, Syrian, Armenian Catholic, Greek Catholic, Latin}

[Armenian Orthodox, Other Orthodox, Muslims and Jews]

It is estimated that in its 37 years B.C. educated 5,000 students (4,000 graduated).

From the outset the students at Baghdad College had come from all classes of society and from the numerous religions and rites prevailing in Iraq, whether Muslim, Jew, or Christian. Most of the students were drawn from the middle and upper classes because of the fact that Baghdad College, unlike the government schools charged tuition. There was a serious but unsuccessful attempt to recruit poor Muslims from the environs of Sulaikh (Shargawiyn). In the early thirties the fee was ID 4.800 per year (at that time equivalent to \$16.80) but increased during the decade of the forties to ID 25 per year, which included transportation. Despite these relatively high rates, applicants for admission to the school kept increasing. Provision was made for poor boys so that some 11% of the students had free tuition in whole or in part.

In contrast to the initial practice at the American University in Beirut which persisted for a good number of years where Muslims were required to attend chapel services, at Baghdad College there was no attempt to make Muslims into Christians at Baghdad College. In fact the non-Christians were not allowed to attend religion classes or services. This policy allayed whatever suspicions there may have been in the minds of the Muslims at the outset, and they enrolled in ever-increasing numbers. There had been relatively few applications from Jews because they had their own private educational institution of high quality, the Frank Iny School.



*Fr. Quinn at assembly, about to send scholars to class*

## The *El Iraqi*-*Al Iraqi* Yearbook

One of the activities which later became a permanent record was the yearbook. It was named *El Iraqi* from 1934 to 1950 and *Al Iraqi* from 1951 to 1969 and from the beginning was published by the senior students. Initially the *El Iraqi* was a quarterly magazine with essays by the students. In 1940 it was published in book form and became the official record of the graduating class, celebrating the students, their teachers and the major events of their five-year tenure at Baghdad College. The earliest printings were done in Baghdad but in 1947 the work was carried out at the Jesuit printing press "Imprimerie Catholique" in Lebanon. Each year they were available for the graduates, in fact for all students, at graduation time.

The editors of *El Iraqi* - *Al Iraqi* worked during the whole school year to prepare the annual yearbook gathering the pictures and written material for the book as well as advertisements from Iraqi businessmen who were eager to support the school. The Arabic teacher for both the students and the Jesuits, Mr. Bechir Khadhury, would supervise the Arabic section and Fr. James Larkin photographed the groups appearing in the book. Many of the students showed their interest by their participating in the literary contest, and looking forward to the thrill of seeing their prize-winning essay in print, as noted by Waiel Hindo.

The two year books *Al Iraqi* and *Al-Hikma* were two fields where students could express their abilities in writing in both Arabic and English languages, and also, in photography and drawing. During the sixties Fr. Paul Nash played a big role in improving and expanding these two publications.  
(Waiel Hindo, B.C. '60, A.H. '64)

Many perceptive and revealing articles appear in the annual *Al Iraqi*. Below a Kurdish student expresses the pride of many Baghdad College Kurdish students in their origins and describes the Kurdish Tribes in Iraq.

I am now eighteen years old, and I have spent most of this time among the Kurdish Tribes of Iraq. I think I have quite enough information about them, for I am one of them. You would be surprised if you saw nature's beauty up in the northern part of the country. The north is full of rivers, mountains, valleys, and forests, which all together form an attractive territory. The people live in small, romantic villages among high and rocky mountains. All do not live in

villages. Some are scattered in small groups among the painted hills and along the river banks and in gorgeous green valley, each doing his own work separately, but joining with others in defense of their territory. Some live in huts made of mud and wood. Others, having no stationary home, travel from place to place, looking for food for their animals. A third group live in big houses, made of white stone.

The Kurdish people are divided into entirely different tribes. Each tribe lives in a certain place, and each tribe has a chief of its own. More than that, each tribe performs a different kind of labor. All are kind to every stranger that enters their village or nest-like home. But there is no stranger among them, for they treat each single human being gently and with respect.

When Kurds grow up, they are not educated men. The fault is not theirs, for they have no schools to study in. They are clever, but they cannot show it, because they do not go to school. The few rich boys who study in cities far away from their homes are bright enough to stand on equal terms with their school companions. When I say the Kurdish lads are clever, I do not mean all, but certainly many of them are very intelligent.

The majority of the people do not know science, but they know one thing that is useful occasionally to every human being, and that is, how to fight. The Kurdish people are so skillful in fighting that one might think they are born to fight. They do whatever their chief tells them to do even if the request requires their lives. Most of them are fiery-tempered, and I think it is their temper which makes them courageous.

There is one undesirable thing in the character of the Kurdish people, and that thing may be called "Feud Blood". When something dishonorable is done to them, they never forget it, and they must take their revenge. They never forgive anyone who has done wrong to them in any way, and that is because "feud blood" is in their veins. They never realize that fatalism is wrong, but they do what they have decided to do, whether the action is right or wrong.

The Kurdish population in Iraq is not more than one-half million, but the Kurdish people speak four different dialects and wear four different kinds of costumes. This difference makes the Kurdish people lose their unity, because there is no relationship among those who speak different dialects and wear different costumes.

Though many wonderful things are to be found in





Kurdisdan, one thing is missing, and that one thing is modern civilization. But that is approaching nearer and nearer, and gradually it will spread over all Kurdisdan. (Tahsin al-Amin, Al Iraqi 1952 pp. 77-78)

### The boarding division

Offering housing for students enabled the Jesuits to reach past the outskirts of Baghdad to far away students and this introduced Baghdadis to the culture and customs of the rest of Iraq. It lasted almost three decades from 1938 to 1965.

The boarding section during the first decade housed over 200 individual students who cherished it as their home. In 1938 Fr. Leo Shea, the first director, welcomed the first group of 23 boarders to the old Baghdad College building on the banks of the Tigris. For the next 27 years the Jesuits bestowed the daily attention it demanded with untiring (and sometimes tiring) devotion from early morning until far into the night.

Boarding applicants reached a peak enrollment of 68 in 1944. But the boarding facilities were never able to keep pace with the expanding enrollment so that many applicants could not be accepted. In 1942 the boarders for the first time were divided into junior and senior sections with a nearby residence leased for the accommodation of the senior boarders. The seniors profited from this arrangement by finding a freedom and fellowship which could not be enjoyed when they shared the residence of the younger boarders.



*An armed boarder*



*Disarmed boarders*

It was the boarding school which made Baghdad College so thoroughly an "Iraqi school for Iraqi boys". While the non-boarders, a majority, gave the school its Baghdad character, it was the boarders who gave the school its Iraqi spirit. Boarders gathered from all corners of the land, from Mosul, Faish-Khabur,

Basra and Kirkuk, from the desert reaches beyond Hai and Diwania to the rugged mountain slopes of Sulaimaniya and Halepcha. Sons of sheikhs and doctors, of merchants and carpenters; they lived together for five years in a common life. They contributed their regional virtues to the school and also learned to suppress their differences in order to pursue their common interests and to live harmoniously as one family with understanding and esteem for each other. Companionship ripened into fast friendships that endured through life. The Iraqi boarders even found a more broadening influence in contacts with a small number of other fellow boarders who had come from Egypt, Transjordan, Palestine, Syria, Kuwait, and Iran.

The order of the day for the boarders tended to develop the powers of his body, mind, and will. For the Christian boarder, the day began with Mass, and for all there were regular periods of study that were supervised by the Jesuit Fathers. During the times of recreation, all sports were supervised by the Fathers, and ample playing fields were available for getting plenty of exercise. There was always zest for spur-of-the-moment games from table tennis to tawli (backgammon).

Boarders did not easily forget the Saturday night soirees with varieties of parlor games and prizes for the winners. Fr. Mahan, a long-time director, placed great stress on productive use of leisure time. The Fathers were always present to encourage the boarders to employ their leisure time profitably by taking an active interest in dramatics, debating, drawing, photography, music, Sodality, scientific society, the school library, etc. Certainly, one of the most satisfying thoughts for parents was the intimate concern the Fathers had for the welfare of their boys.

Living in most friendly association, under the same roof as their teachers, the boarders enjoyed the advantage not only of sympathetic counsel but also good example in courteous ways, good manners as well as lofty and noble ideals. They exercised a fatherly care and kindly supervision of their boys. All money for the personal expenses of the boarders was sent directly to the college treasurer. The student would then draw out this money in small amounts as he needed it, with the approval of the Jesuit Prefect.

### **An increasing faculty**

The active teaching and administrative staff in 1946 numbered

21 Americans, 8 Iraqis, and 2 Egyptians. Of the Americans, 17 taught classes leaving four in administration. The Iraqis and Egyptians were engaged for the most part in teaching Arabic-language subjects.

## **Curriculum at Baghdad College in the Forties**

This "Iraqi school for Iraqi boys" was really a junior college and a high school in American terminology. It offered a five-year college-preparatory science curriculum, with three years spent on physics, three on chemistry, three on biology, and five years on mathematics, all taught in English. Most of the other subjects, religion, history, and geography were taught in Arabic. Prior to 1936 the program of the school had been broader, embracing such subjects as French, German, drawing, hygiene, sociology, economics, etc. When the military Conscription Law of 1936 made it necessary to bring the program of the school into conformity with that of government schools so that the students could take the Government Examinations, it became necessary to restrict the program, putting much more emphasis on the natural sciences. A forties graduate comments.

Respect for national curriculum: the college was proud to declare that it was an Iraqi school for Iraqi boys. This commitment was kept alive in spirit and letter. The national curriculum was strictly adhered to, quantitatively and qualitatively. The college endeavored to enable its people to achieve an increasingly harmonious and positive interaction at all levels into their environment. (Fārid Oufi, B.C. '48)

The ordinary class week consisted of 29 class periods and four study periods. A period was 45 minutes in length. Thursdays and Saturdays were half days, classes ended before noon, and Sunday was the day off. Since nearly all the students took the comprehensive Iraq Government Examinations in Arabic at the end of the third and fifth year, they attended optional science and mathematics classes in Arabic offered at Baghdad College to prepare for this crucial exam.

The science program prepared the students for more than these comprehensive government exams, it also prepared them for their university studies, as many of the students discovered, much to their delight. When they came to American colleges to study science, for instance, they found that they were much better prepared than their American classmates. Also there was formed a strong bond among the students that lasted a lifetime, and more than a few graduates have commented on this.



I was so lucky to have met and made true and lasting friends that to this day are as close to me as my family: Maxin Thomas, Nazar Shemdin, Jamal Bushara, Ramzi Hermiz and Sargon Rustum. Academically I was so well prepared for College (St. Louis University), that I breezed through my first year. (Adolf Forage , B.C. '48)

### **Textbooks**

Except for Religion and English literature all the textbooks used were the same textbooks in Arabic which were commonly used in the Iraq Government schools. Supplementary texts in English were used for the mathematics and science courses. The methods and principles of education at Baghdad College reflected those of the Jesuit schools throughout the world. The curricula of the other Jesuit schools, however, was more humanistic and less scientific than that of Baghdad College.

### **Influence of Baghdad College on education in this decade**

In 1969, when the Iraqi Government seemed about to take over Baghdad College and expel the Jesuits, some Baghdad University professors who had become familiar with Baghdad College graduates emphasized that the Jesuits had brought many innovations to Iraqi education. Only one who knew the country in the early thirties could verify this. Baghdad College was in a better position to experiment with curriculum, with student activities, with athletic events and with boarding facilities to find out what worked best for Iraqi students.

One reason for this was its location, unencumbered by political and social unrest in the city. The Catholic hierarchy wanted the Jesuits to settle in the city and in the middle of the Christian community and thus be close by to help solve the community problems as well as to serve the community sacramentally. This was not the Jesuit plan because it reflected a ghetto mentality. There proved to be many advantages to having the school away from the center of the city and having Muslim neighbors, not the least of which was constructing a bridge of understanding between Islam and Christianity.

Besides, growth of the city was inevitable. In the early thirties when the population of Baghdad was concentrated between the areas of North and South Gates, one appreciated the venturesome move of purchasing school property so far from the heart of the city. At the time, many considered the action foolhardy. It was not long, however, before the city began to expand northward from North Gate plot by plot getting closer to





Sulaikh. Hundreds of new homes and merchants' shops mushroomed. Other Baghdad educators envied the spacious Baghdad College grounds, set apart from the diversions and politics of the city in a place where students could enjoy an uninterrupted campus atmosphere. From the outset Baghdad College had attempted to identify itself with the best interests of Iraq. The Jesuits, continually evaluating their effectiveness, came up with adaptations suited to customs, temperaments, aspirations, and language of their charges. This was noted by an Al-Hikma graduate Premjit Talwar.

Another thing that impressed me is the Jesuits' knowledge of and sensitivity to local culture and customs which are usually ignored by foreign enterprises. It is remarkable that they have continuous feedback to correct for the reality they perceive. Every business should do this, but a key question is: "Why do Jesuits do this? How were they trained to be so sensitized to local conditions?" (Premjit Talwar, A.H. '68)

From the time of the Jesuits arrival they did not escape the suspicion that they were agents of imperialistic interests. Their actions and methods were subjected to close and constant scrutiny. Gradually, though, the Iraqis came to realize that these Fathers had no intention of trying to pour Iraqi youth into the mold of an American schoolboy. Eventually Iraqis were convinced that the Jesuits were devoted to sharing the treasures of 20th century American education with this growing country and this ancient civilization. Then Iraqis honored the Jesuits with their confidence.

The Jesuits made every effort to be worthy of the trust placed in them by making Baghdad College a distinctive Iraqi school for Iraqi youth. Once an Iraqi under-secretary of State suggested to the principal of Baghdad College: "If anyone accuses your school of being imperialistic or non-patriotic, simply publish your student roster which reads like a complete list of Iraqi patriots. Baghdad College is a school of patriots, a school of patriots' sons."

Among Baghdad College students were found many of the sons of Iraqis prominent in government, education, the professions, the armed forces and business. For example, during one scholastic year sons of four different cabinet members attended Baghdad College. In the appendix are listed the names of students' parents who were ministers of government along with other prominent citizens.

**Influence of Jesuits as perceived by some alumni.**

In an account of his days at Baghdad College (1943-48), Farid Oufi wrote enthusiastically in the school yearbook *Al-Iraqi*, and Ramzi Hermiz wrote of his wonderful background when competing with the elite from American schools. Another Baghdad College student, Stanley Marrow '47 later became the first Jesuit vocation from the school, although not the first priest since Fr. Abdul-Ahad Estepahn (who became a diocesan priest) preceded Fr. Marrow to the seminary. Fr. Marrow wrote about his introduction to the Jesuits and to their school. After this follows a translation of an Arabic letter sent by an anonymous Baghdad College graduate. The letter expresses the feelings of gratitude and appreciation that many alumni shared about the work of the Jesuits in Iraq. First though, we hear from Farid Oufi.

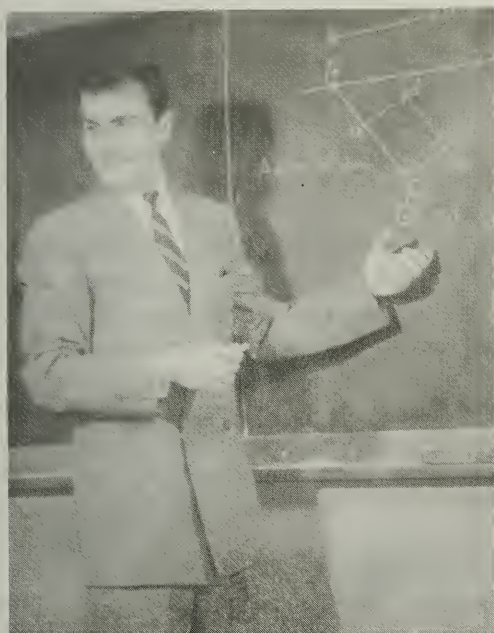
Alumni owe an immense debt to Baghdad College which instilled self-confidence in its pupils through its academic agenda as well as the human values it imparted. They profited from learning a second language as a social necessity while maximizing effort to keep the native language fully and very much alive; offering to everyone the opportunities of acquiring beliefs and concepts that would help meet challenges ahead; gaining knowledge of the way to stronger faith in God; learning civil duties and the love of homeland; and harmonizing the process of learning with physical activities. The school landscape was "the fountain of life" to show the way to perpetual success and a "lamp which gave us a bright light to illuminate our path in times of misfortune and hardship."

After 45 years of ups and downs of real life I can say with confidence that B.C. years are still remembered with respect and admiration. I do not think I am making out too idealistic a case for the Baghdad College experience, but reminiscences of my days at Baghdad College bring forward three major things which, I believe, have characterized the school life. Academic standards were extremely high as recognized by many people, and that is why pupils from different segments of the population sought enrollment. The college was to transmit moral values together with knowledge, accompanied by the traditional discipline which the Jesuits were, and still, known to sustain in their educational institutions.

In spite of the fact that B.C. embraced pupils from different social backgrounds, there was much harmony in the school life during those days. We lived as a big family. The college offered clear, compassionate instructions in civility.

Graduates gained a sense of worth, a sense of being valued. They also shared a sense of community spirit. This explains, perhaps, why they are tremendously enthusiastic about their alumni. (Farid Oufi, '48)

During the first session of *Orientation Week* at Princeton (School of Engineering) it was then explained to us that statistics from recent prior years indicate that one of every three of us would not be in the School of Engineering next year. We were cautioned to have no comfort from knowing that we were at or near the top of wherever we came from . . . because, that applied to just about everyone of us.



*Ramzi Hermiz, '48 later teaching at B.C.*

We were then familiarized with a "competitive" grading system that divided the students of a subject class into Seven Groups. "Group Seven" and "Group Six" failed the course subject no matter how well they did in the exams. "Group Two" was needed (every year) to retain an academic scholarship (for the following year). "Group One" meant that you knew just about everything that the professor expected you to learn from the course.

Sometimes (but not often), when a professor needed to recognize and express that a student had done so well in the subject and went beyond what he had personally taught, the grade was "*Group One Plus*". At the end of my first college semester at Princeton Fr. Sullivan's teaching in mathematics and Fr. Guay's training in chemistry were recognized at "*Group One Plus*". (Ramzi Hermiz, B.C. '48)

That summer of 1942 the Fathers had extended an invitation to the boys in Baghdad to go up to Sulaikh on one or two days of the week to use the playgrounds. A bus, actually a partially



converted army lorry, picked up youngsters from the area of Karrada and brought them to Sulaikh to play handball and volleyball and have lunch in the then minuscule canteen which consisted mainly of an area shaded from the heat of the sun by a corrugated iron roof. It was my first sight of the school where, starting that September, I would spend the next five years of my life.

My mother brought me to the campus for registration. When it was finished she held me by the shoulder and said to the principal, Father Devenny, "Father, he's your son!" To this day, more than fifty years later, Father Devenny remembers the incident as the best commentary on the "Behold your son!" in the Gospel of John. Father Connell, who replaced Father Devenny as principal, recounted many years later an identical situation. The father of the boy being registered at Baghdad College, said to him, "Father, keep the flesh, just give me the bones!" The trust in the Jesuits and, implicitly, in the Jesuit system of education was almost instinctive among these people who, while the world was going through its Second World War of the century, had one thing less to worry about: the education of their sons right in their own country.

Once the Atom Bomb fell on Hiroshima, Father Guay explained in chemistry class, in matter of fact and perfectly comprehensible terms, how it was done. He went on to say that, sooner or later, they would achieve a process, closer in its workings to the sun's own powerhouse of energy. Word got around and he was then asked to give a public lecture at Baghdad University on the as yet unpublicized Hydrogen bomb.

Father Guay ran summer days for us between our fourth and fifth years. I realized later that was one of the best classes Baghdad College ever had. The enjoyable mornings were spent doing experiments in the laboratory, learning triangulation outside, taking meteorological readings on the roof. One memorable morning it was 132 F in the shade of the little weather station, and the humidity was just 8 %. It alarmed Father Guay sufficiently to order all of us home immediately. He was right. That afternoon we had one of those unforgettable sand storms. (Stanley Marrow, B.C. '47)

In the 1940's, I was a shy young boy from a conservative Muslim family in Baghdad. My father was a judge who, having received part of his education at the American College in Beirut, was open to western ideas. He suggested that I move from the government school in Baghdad. Naturally, it was not easy for someone at my age to move because I had friends at the





government school that I was attending. At that time, a son could not argue with his father about anything, so I tried to get my mother to intercede with my father on my behalf. However, at the end, I had to submit to my father's wishes, and on the way to the Boarding House of the Jesuit School, I heard my father speak three sentences that I will never forget.

My son, he said, the Jesuits are religious people but are not out to influence others with a different religion. However, they will teach you values, self control and obedience, and the education you will receive from them will help you succeed not only in Iraq but anywhere in the world. My father went on to assure me that I would find new friends and establish relationships with others who would be successful in the future, and that even failure at the Jesuit Baghdad College could be a learning experience.

At the time, I was still a young boy and did not appreciate those great utterances of my father. My father died and I am now sixty-five years old, and I find that everything he told me turned out to be true. All these memories crossed my mind when I received your letter inviting me to attend the next Jesuit Reunion in Detroit. I especially think of meeting friends of more than 50 years, many of whom have been successful in life, at work and in upholding good values. This I would consider as one of the most important objectives of the reunion. How I wish for the Jesuits to return back to Iraq so that I could enroll my grandchildren in their school and offer them the same advice that my father gave me when I was a little boy. (*Reunion Yearbook VIII*, 1992, p. 8)

## Reactions from the Baghdadi Jesuits

Life was different from most other Jesuit missionaries. For one thing not many of their fellow missionaries spent their evenings on the roof, as Fr. Madaras narrates. They along with Fr. Ryan were surprised at the facility their charges had in many languages.

## Roofs

For the benefit of our new readers we mention that we sleep out on the roof in summer. This year Father Coffey was the first one out, just as last Fall he was the last one in; on this latter occasion it took a terrific storm to convince him that the natives were right when they said that year-round sleeping on the roof was not advisable. This year he stood it inside until April 22. We followed him a few days later, all except Father Mifsud, who was blown in by a dust storm last year shortly

after he arrived, and has lost all taste for sleeping on roofs.

The natives were surprised when they heard that we were already sleeping outside, and we found out why a few nights later. We were awakened by rain in the face. Rain at all, at such a time of the year is a rare phenomenon, and we thought it wouldn't last long. But somehow, whether in reality or only seemingly, it kept sprinkling intermittently all through the night. At 3:45 Father Coffey beat a hasty retreat. The rest of us, who had experienced this thing once before, stuck to our beds, determined to leave only if the rain should come through the blankets. (Madaras, 1936, p. 152)

## Languages

American Jesuits accustomed to speaking one language have always been in awe of their students who spoke a variety of languages with great ease; Arabic, English, Armenian, Aramaic and Turkish. They thought nothing of it. Fr. Ryan asked a student who grew up in the old Turkish city of Kirkuk (where Turkish was the common language spoken at home) how he would say a particular word in Arabic only to be asked: "which Arabic, classical or colloquial?" Fr. Ryan did not give up but asked: "Well, how would



you say this to your brother?" "To my brother I would say it in Turkish!" The student then revealed that Arabic was not his first language and when he went to primary school he had to learn Arabic sounds as if he were a foreigner. Fr. Ryan who had experienced the bloody entrance made by learning such sounds was even more amazed at the young man's persistence as well as linguistic ability.

*Tanus of Sala'adin cooked for the Jesuits*



## Chapter 5

# The Fifties and Sixties in the Prime of Life



*Let your light so shine before men, that they  
may see your good works and give glory  
to your Father who is in heaven.*

*Matthew 5:16*

### Summary: Baghdad College during these decades

After its first decade of survival and its second decade of phenomenal growth, quadrupling in size, Baghdad College seemed quite secure. It seemed impervious to the numerous political upheavals surrounding Baghdad, also it survived financial and enrollment problems. The fifties then offered a peaceful time to consolidate its growth and plan for the future. In the middle of Baghdad College's last two decades Iraq changed from a monarchy to a republic but this seemed to make little difference in the atmosphere of the school. Also in this time occurred the extension of Jesuit educational efforts from Baghdad College to Al-Hikma University. The Baghdad College Sulaikh campus hosted the fledgling university until it had its own buildings on the Zafarania campus which the government had given to the Jesuits.

During these two decades from 1950 to 1969 the American segment of the faculty changed from being mostly Jesuit priests to a much larger proportion of Jesuit scholastics (not yet ordained) and Jesuit lay volunteers. In some years like 1955 there were 19 Jesuit scholastics and this number of scholastics was not

surpassed by any of the five other high schools in the New England Province. The student body became more numerous and more buildings were built to accommodate them. One such building was Fr. Guay's beautiful creation, the Chapel of the Sacred Heart with its wonderful innovations. The curriculum was expanded to include a commercial section for students who were not completely at home with the sciences but wanted a Jesuit education. All sports events of the city schools found Baghdad College in prominent positions, and frequently city school coaches would attend the Baghdad College games to find out how best to plan their strategies. Baghdad College's ample playing fields provided great opportunities for young athletes.

The Arabic House of Studies for Jesuits started and Jesuits began to undertake a serious inculturation step by becoming bi-ritual (celebrating Mass in two or more rites) as their brother Jesuits had done in Lebanon. Jesuit vocations as well as vocations to the local clergy started to emerge. The Jesuits spent much energy and effort in planning for the future of their school, so frequent meetings were held by the Jesuits to plan how to achieve their goals in a more effective way.

These decades had much to build on and much to thank the men who prepared the way during the previous 18 building years. The superiors of the mission and rector of Baghdad College during this decade included Fr. Madaras (1945-52) followed by Fr. Hussey (1952-58) then one of the many McCarthys, Fr. Michael McCarthy (1958-64) and ended with Fr. Carty (1964-69). The principals (mudeer) were Fr. Connell (1943-52), Fr. Sullivan (1952-60) and Fr. Powers (1960-69). Fr. Kelly was the assistant principal (muawin) until 1963 except for one year's absence which was filled by Fr. Mahoney (1955-56). Fr. Kelly was followed by Fr. Pelletier who ran a very taut ship until 1969.

During the last decade, for the first time, the superiors of the mission were distinct from the rector of Baghdad College. This was a necessary result of the growth of the mission, now boasting of two schools, a language house of studies and later a novitiate. The superiors were Fr. Williams (1961-67) followed by the brief but very important tenure of Fr. John Donohue (1967-69).

## **Growth during these last two decades**

### **The growth of the student body**

When the marks for the government exams were published in the Baghdad newspapers, the citizens found another reminder of Baghdad College because it would have multiple honorable mentions for high marks. Professors found their way to the Baghdad College campus as invited lecturers for various clubs and





extra curricular activities and as part time lecturers. They found the Baghdad College students gracious and charming. Although there was no Baghdad College stamp on their foreheads the Baghdad College graduates were recognized by their intelligence, their manners and their ability to think and express themselves.

Baghdad College students came from more than 60 different primary schools all over Iraq. Certain schools always led the list and an example can be found in the entrance data for the scholastic year beginning in 1953. Here are the names of such schools sending 116 freshman to Baghdad College in 1953-54

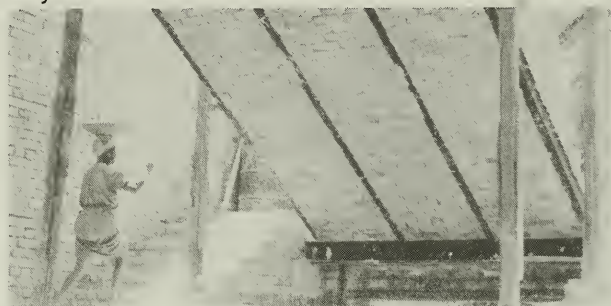
27 from	Adil Primary	9 from	Armenian United
7 from	Battaween Primary	4 from	Ghazi Primary
3 from	Hidad in Basrah	10 from	Hikmat Primary
3 from	Kadhimia Primary	13 from	Latin Primary
10 from	Mashriq Primary	8 from	Najib Pasha
7 from	Nashia Primary	8 from	Saadun Primary
3 from	Syrian Primary	4 from	Tatbiqat Primary

After several decades Baghdad College had become a familiar landmark. Its students were attracting attention in the intellectual, social and athletic life of the city and its graduates were making their mark in all phases of society. One of the few areas of Baghdad included in the city's bus maps was the Sulaikh property of Baghdad College at the northern edge of the map - and later Al-Hikma would be included in the southern lower edge of the map. Throughout the whole city Baghdad citizens were accustomed to seeing the orange Baghdad College buses filled with exuberant scholars traveling to and from class. One parent had a plan to build bus-stop shelters throughout the city to keep these same scholars shaded or dry during the sun or rain. It was said that one such was built but a small family moved into it claiming it by immanent domain, so the project was abandoned.

### **More buildings**

Buildings continued to rise through the fifties and even the sixties. The new buildings answered all the needs of the growing school. Fr. Guay's glorious chapel was a wonder of beauty and practicality, and left in awe not only the students but also the many visitors who came to see it. The Rice Science Building had better facilities than any of the other schools back in New England, as the Jesuits who went to teach in them after the expulsion found out, one marvel was the sloped classrooms. The Cronin Building was adaptable for many things: large classrooms, a small auxiliary chapel, physics lecture rooms and an auxiliary residence for Jesuits.

Fr. Madaras and Fr. Guay who had a Ph.D. in chemistry and was a naturally gifted scientist, planned and built the nine buildings bringing taste as well as practicality to their work. Both adapted well to the materials on hand: a good example is a process peculiar to places like Iraq who had rapid drying gypsum cement which allowed for *jack-arching*. Two I-beams were placed horizontally (or at a slant for a stairway) two feet apart, then the mason would start at one end of the support building small arches of four bricks set in between the beams. Since the mortar dried so rapidly he was able to kneel on the newly laid brick and moved across to the other support, thus constructing a section two feet wide in a very short time.



*Jack arched sections*

Gregarious by nature Fr. Guay met an interesting man in 1945 named Buckminster Fuller and spent many hours in conversation with him, since they were both aboard the same ship traveling from America to the Middle East. The agreement was that in order to pass the time on the ship, they would exchange information on their respective fields so that when the journey was over Buckminster Fuller knew much more about chemistry and Fr. Guay knew a great deal about architecture.

Many people of Baghdad cooled their houses by using a column of air flowing over watered brush. Because of the low humidity there was little problem with dampness when a continual stream of water falling on camel thorn (a'gool) which had been placed at the mouth of the air pumps would evaporate, thus cooling the air pumped into the ducts. Fr. Guay utilized these principles of a simple tropical air-cooling method for individual windows, to develop an efficient mechanized centralized system for air cooling the rooms of an entire building. After making his walls two feet thick, he built large ducts leading throughout the building, carrying a continuous stream of cooled air forced in by powerful pumps which had been placed at strategic sections of the exterior wall. This was not air conditioning as we know it but rather air cooling (called "desert cooler" in Arizona) and it worked because

the average humidity of Baghdad was an extremely low 15%.



*Tunnel under the Science building used an air cooling vent*

## The New Chapel

Fr. Guay's work on the chapel was no less remarkable. One of his many challenges was to make a rose window which he fashioned out of colored glass set in a frame of the local fast drying mortar. The exterior dimensions were 164 feet by 84 feet. The cross surmounting the tower rises 80 feet above the ground. An architect with vision and a mason skilled with the tools of his trade can transform brick, a derivative of common clay, into a thing of surpassing beauty.

Fr. Guay was single minded about his buildings. He designed a building that would embody the best and most economical construction that he could devise with local materials and local workmen, keeping in mind the sacred functions for which the chapel was primarily designed. The result was a happy and harmonious blending of styles, a fusion of East and West. The ornamental motifs of the exterior had been developed from ancient Babylonian, Assyrian and Arab styles and were characteristic of other buildings on the campus. His bricklayers were particularly adept at doing this sort of thing. With a special axe-like tool they carved the brick like a sculptor manipulating stone or wood.



*Fr. Guay's chapel*





The dignity and simple beauty of the main altar was impressive. The stone was of buff color with a vein of orange and was quarried in Lebanon where Hiram, the King of Tyre had cut the giant cedars that adorned the Temple built by Solomon in Jerusalem. The altar steps, as well as the sanctuary and the central aisle of the nave blended nicely with the pastel green of the sanctuary walls.



*Interior of the chapel showing Fr. Guay's rose window*

The altar stood in a spacious sanctuary that was raised three steps above the floor level of the nave. Flanking the apse were two large sacristies furnished with vesting cabinets that provided ample space for nine priests vesting simultaneously for Mass at each of the chapel's nine altars. One of the neighbors confided to a Jesuit: "We were Chaldeans but had decided to become Syrian Catholics. Now after seeing this church we have decided to become Jesuits."



*Upon completion of a building a sheep would reluctantly provide for a party.*



## **New undertakings during these last two decades**

### **The Secondary Commercial Section**

Not all people are cut out to be scientists and doctors, just as not all are cut out to be poets and merchants. Some of the students were clearly not at home with the sciences and were still quite intelligent and had much to offer. It was decided in the middle of this decade that the time had come to start a section for commercial studies.

Here is presented the documentation from the minister of education giving permission for the beginning of the Secondary Commercial Section.

DOC # 64 No. 397000 September 25, 1956  
 Ministry of Education  
 Directorate-General of Education  
 Directorate of Higher Studies/Private and Foreign  
 Subject: Opening of a Secondary Commercial Section  
 To: Baghdad College Administration  
 We approve what was contained in your letter # D/M/490  
 dated September 7, 1956.  
 (signed) For Director-General of Education  
 Dr. Mohammed Hamid al-Tai

### **The Arabic House of Studies for Jesuits**

A language house was started in the Saadun section of Baghdad in 1952. Here the Jesuits were able to concentrate their talents and energy to the study of Arabic and the culture of the Arab world. The language house was started by Fr. Madaras who named it after St. Joseph. It is not clear why but many of the Jesuits were partial to Joseph; in fact 14 out of the 60 men in the missions' last days were named Joseph. If there is one, the patron saint of language schools for Jesuits struggling with a second language, it probably is the North American martyr Noel Chabanel, S.J. (1613-1649). Noel was born in southern France, entered the Jesuits and became a brilliant professor of rhetoric in France. He requested to serve in the Huron mission and arrived there in 1643. There he found that he had no aptitude at all for learning the Huron language and each attempt only brought loud laughter from the natives. His first sermon was filled with vulgarities taught him by a mischievous Huron tutor. Since then, Jesuits who have struggled with foreign languages have identified with Noel's frustration. In fact more than one Jesuit language school has been named *Chabanel* House in his honor.

The language school occupied three different houses in as many periods in the Saadun area from 1952-1968. Several of the

Jesuit scholars recall their experiences.

I remember, most fondly, Yusuf Masconi, my mentor in Arabic was very faithful in coming to Rawaf St. and sitting down with a young scholastic, teaching him the intricacies of the language. How young, inexperienced, and ignorant I must have seemed to him but he never let on to any of this. I used to drive him home after every lesson and we would have tea served by Columba his wife. He only asked one thing of me, as he turned my Arabic composition from charcoal to pearls and this was to visit his grave if ever I came back to Baghdad. Maybe, sometime I will be able to do this. (Fr. Hicks)

The establishment by the Jesuits of a "language house" at Saadun meant that superiors were totally serious and expected us to stay in Iraq for a very long term. For me it meant that now I could enter the culture more deeply. One year of classroom teaching at Sulaikh gave me a very strong desire to learn the Arabic language in order to get to know Iraqis better and to feel more at home in their culture. After two years of very difficult study and practice, under the tutelage of Frs. Richard McCarthy and John Mahoney and Prof. Faraj Raffouli, I felt more and more confident in the language and also felt I now wanted to spend the rest of my life in Iraq after ordination. Unfortunately, my religious Superiors decided otherwise and I did not return to Iraq. But Arabic was of great use to me in my later ministries among refugees in Sudan and even later when working in Jordan. Praise God! (Fr. Smith)

## **Bi-ritual Jesuits**

Priests who were ordained to celebrate Mass in more than one rite, "bi-ritual", were very common in the Near East Province. In the 1969 Jesuit catalog the Jesuits of this province were listed with their rite and most of them had three or four rites after their names: Maronite, Byzantine, Coptic, Syrian, Melkite, Chaldean, Armenian and Latin. Usually a man celebrates Mass in the rite in which he was born, but for Apostolic reasons they would assume another rite.

A number of Baghdadi Jesuits chose to apply for permission from the Patriarch of the rite and then they applied themselves in earnest to learn the language and the rubrics of that rite. The first steps were taken in 1956. Several of the Fathers had obtained permission to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in another rite in addition to the Latin rite. Fr. Edward Banks in the Chaldean rite which he exercised in Baghdad from about 1960 and



then later in Beirut for seven years; Fr. Campbell and Fr. Scopp, the Chaldean rite; Fr. James McCarthy in the Melkite rite; Fr. Young in the Syrian rite; Fr. Como in the Chaldean rite; Fr. Bonian in the Maronite rite; Fr. Taft in the Russo-Byzantine rite. Fr. Edward Banks recalls his journey into the Chaldean Rite.

In 1956 Fr. Campbell sent a transcription (the writing of the Aramaic words in English letters) of the Nestorian Liturgy from the U.S. It occurred to me that the Chaldean Liturgy (nearly the same as the Nestorian) could thus be transcribed and with a knowledge of the rubrics and a general sense of the meaning of the texts one could celebrate the Chaldean Liturgy when asked to offer Mass for a Chaldean congregation.

I proposed this idea to the Rector, Fr. Hussey who agreed and so I made an appointment to see the Patriarch, Yusuf Ghanima: I never actually saw him; I was interviewed by Bishop Ghanni, then secretary to the Patriarch. After I made my proposal, Bishop Ghanni excused himself to consult with His Beatitude. On his return he gave the response of the Patriarch: "No, let the young man learn the Aramaic language". After consultation with Khoury Yusuf Tumma, the priest at Gailani Camp, I got in touch with a shammas (deacon) in Shaqlawa, northern Iraq and arranged to spend some time there learning to read Aramaic.

Khoury Yusuf took care of rubrics instruction. Shammas Yusuf Mairi of Baghdad instructed in Aramaic and Chant. Faraj Raffouli took care of Arabic. Finally I was able to say the Mass well enough so that I could celebrate public Mass at Gailani Camp each Sunday and at Baghdad College once in a while. That was the beginning of Jesuit bi-ritualism in Iraq.

Fr. Walter Young was ordained by Bishop Bakhos, the Syrian Bishop of Baghdad, as a priest of the Syrian rite. This took place in our chapel at the college. Fr. Dennis Como was ordained at Weston for the Chaldean rite and spent some time in Baghdad as a Chaldean priest, notably in the minor seminary (at the time directed by the Jesuits). (Fr. Edward Banks)

On April 12, 1965 Fr. Young transferred from the Latin to the Syrian rite seeking a closer identity with a large segment of his flock. He was ordained by Baghdad's Syrian Archbishop, the late Athanasius Bakose, in the chapel of Baghdad College. The next day he offered his first Mass in the Syrian Cathedral which was located in the Christian quarter of the old city. He later elected to do theology studies in Lebanon with Arabic-speaking seminarians rather than return to the United States. One of his fellow seminarians during this period, was a young



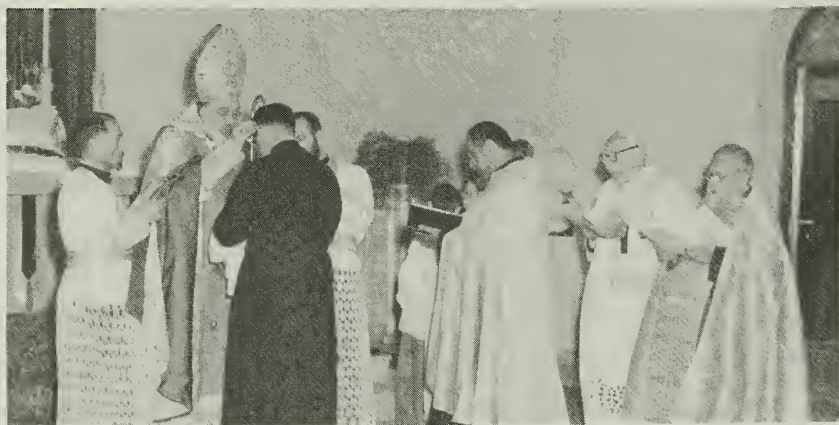
Jesuit named Peter Hans Kolvenbach who is now the Superior General of all Jesuits.      (Fr. Young)

### **Vocations (Jesuit and Diocesan)**

The first graduate of Baghdad College who became a priest was Fr. Abdul-Ahad Estepahn and he celebrated a Mass at Baghdad College chapel in 1956. Others were Raphael Cheiko and Abdul Salam Hilwa and the six Jesuits, Frs. Stanley Marrow, Solomon Sara, Clarence Burby, Hikmet Emmanuel, Yusuf Seferta and Stephen Bonian.

Stanley Marrow came to Baghdad College, together with almost all his classmates from the Carmelites' Saint Joseph "Latin" School. In 1947 five students from Baghdad College came to the United States to study in Santa Clara (John Mangassarian), U. of Arizona (the late Sylvain Serkis), U. of Detroit (Francis Faraje), U. of St. Louis (Shakir al-Badir), and Boston College (Stanley Marrow). Like the rest of them, Stanley came to study "science". Unlike them, he decided to become a Jesuit. When Stanley spoke to Father Devenny of his desire, he was asked, "Do you realize that this will involve many, many years of study?" "That's what I'm coming for."

Lacking both Latin and Greek made entry into the Jesuits of New England very difficult. Messages between Boston and Baghdad resorted to the use of "Stanislaus" to conceal this business from prying eyes in the Rashid Street post office. Finally, on September 14, 1949, Father Devenny drove Stanley to the Novitiate in Shadowbrook. He was the first Baghdad College Jesuit vocation.



*Syrian Archbishop Bakose conferring on Fr. Marrow minor orders, 3/10/56*

At the end of his study of philosophy, in 1955, he finally returned to Baghdad College with one of the largest groups of young





Jesuits ever to leave for the mission. All the young Jesuits in that group had received Minor Orders at Weston before leaving except Stanley, who, being a member of the Syrian Rite, was to be ordained by Archbishop Bakose in the new chapel of Baghdad College. The very long ceremony took place (on the very day when the Novitiate in Shadowbrook burned down) in the presence of a chapel full of students, friends, and relatives. He still remembers his return to the sacristy to unvest after the ordination, where the great (and the adjective is not used idly) Fr. Madaras embraced him and, with tears in his eyes, said, "This is what the mission is all about!" It was then that he understood the reason for the joy that filled him when, at the end of his first year as a novice, he was told that a second Jesuit from the Baghdad mission was to join him, Shlaimun Issa Sara Shamun, B.C. '50.

People may think that all the Iraqi vocations to the New England Province came from Baghdad. Even though all did join from Baghdad, not all of them were Baghdadis. Sam Sara's family (the New England Province version of his name) actually came from Mangaish, a small town in the Kurdish territory. In 1945 he came to Baghdad to study at Baghdad College, and upon graduation in 1950 he joined the Society. Before leaving town, he visited Mrs. Marrow, the mother of Stanley Marrow, the first Iraqi to join the New England Province, and it was here he felt that he was seriously leaving home. Even though this was their first meeting, her maternal care and sadness at the departure made leaving Baghdad a melancholy affair.

After seven years of Jesuit studies he returned to Baghdad for his teaching experience from 1957 to 1960. The return home was full of expectations, but nothing could have prepared one for the richness and the heavy commitments of the Jesuit faculty and their lay colleagues, both Christian and Muslim, to the school and the city. The multi-ethnic, multi-religious and linguistic diversity of the school gave it a cosmopolitan air. He found plenty to do and was in great demand by everyone, students, lay faculty and other Jesuits.

Clarence Burby, born in Iraq, often spoke of his happy days at Baghdad College and his desire to see other Iraqi youth respond to the seeds of grace planted by the Baghdadi Jesuits. Hikmet Emmanuel also spoke of his fond memories of Baghdad College.

It was the week before Christmas, 1989, when I stopped at Baghdad College to reflect with nostalgia on the happy years I had spent there. As I looked at the main building, I began to think of my education, the good example of the Jesuits, and the cherished memories of my former teachers. As I reflect on the

sentiments of many Baghdad College Alumni, I sense in them similar feelings of gratitude and loyalty consistent with members of an extended family of Baghdad College graduates. (Hikmet N. Emmanuel)

### **Jesuit scholarship**

The Jesuits from the beginning were aware that they had to adapt themselves to their new surroundings. They were there to educate Iraqis and education in Iraq was not education in New England. Early on people were set aside to study Arabic and the language opened up unexpected vistas, but there remained a desire to go even deeper into culture and the history. Fr. Richard McCarthy was set aside for studies in Islamic theology and became one of the modern authorities on the theologian al-Baqalani. Fr. Hamil and Fr. Campbell were directed towards literature. Fr. Hamil's study on Ja'far al-Khalili was translated into Arabic, and a Dictionary of Arab authors directed by Fr. Campbell came off the press. Fr. John Donohue opted for history and studied the 10th century when Shiism (Shee'a ism) prevailed in the Middle East. Fr. Martin McDermott followed up on Shiite (Shee'a) studies and his work on al-Shaikh al-Mufeed had been translated into Persian and Arabic which merited him an invitation to Qumm in Iran for the millenary of Shaikh al-Mufeed. (Fr. Donohue)

### **Jesuit planning during these decades**

As the enrollment increased the problems became more intricate and required more formal structures to confront them such as committees and sub-committees with decision making more delegated and sub-delegated. Life in the Jesuit community lent itself very readily to discussions since the meals were in common. The men talked a great deal about their interests, the school and the students. As a result old customs and approaches were called into question and new proposals were put forth. There was always the nagging feeling that they could be doing the job better.

From the early days, B.C. followed the program prescribed for secondary schools by the Iraq Government. There was no desire on the part of the Jesuits to transfer American programs of study to Iraq. In the framework of the Iraqi program the Jesuits offered their students a distinct advantage - bilingualism in Arabic and English. The students studied science and mathematics in English and in Arabic. Thus they were prepared to take the final Government Exams in Arabic and also to pursue further scientific study at Baghdad University through the medium of English. Also



several were judged competent by the Government to study abroad in the U.S.A. and Great Britain.

From evidence available and from the response of Professors in Baghdad University, the Jesuits judged that they were making a substantial contribution to education in Iraq during a crucial period in its development. Many graduates went on in medicine and engineering - the two status professions in the developing world. Very few went into politics. The Jesuits never considered themselves purveyors of political ideology and deliberately refrained from entering into the complexities of Iraqi politics and from currying the favor of any political faction; this neutral stance was an asset for 37 years. (Fr. Donohue)

### **To interest graduates staying in Iraq**

One of the real concerns of the Jesuits was the fact that some of our students were leaving for Western countries and not returning to Iraq. Jesuits came to help the Christians as well as Muslims find their way in a Muslim society. They became discouraged to find themselves in Iraq and some of their charges in America. Their aim was to help build a vibrant and involved Christian community and continue the great work that Iraqi Christians had been doing for 19 centuries. They did not blame the graduates for leaving but they asked if the sacrifices they made to come to Baghdad were not backfiring on them. After all, the English that the Jesuits taught facilitated migration to America and acceptance into foreign schools. Facetiously they asked: "Why not run our school over in the U.S. for students as they arrive? It would be easier on everyone." Of course it was perfectly understandable for some of the graduates to leave; they needed higher degrees and did not want to go to the local colleges and jobs were difficult to find.

### **The "A" sections**

At Baghdad College in the fifties, much thought was given to the special "A" sections which had the best students homogeneously grouped. It started perhaps after the model of advanced placement programs in America. Teachers knew from experience that bright students get bored when the matter is being explained to others at a painfully slow pace. Then there is no alternative for the smarter students but to raise Cain. The program was meant to motivate students to try harder by competing with other smart students and emulation was always part of Jesuit education. The program was nearly abandoned in 1961 when the 5A class raised much more Cain than was allowed.



## Jesuit influence during these last two decades

There were many expressions by former students of the Jesuit influence in their lives. A few alumni are quoted here, one of whom is Stanley Marrow, S.J. who had a memorable first teaching experience as a Jesuit teacher at Baghdad College

I would need thousands of words to describe how helpful the curriculum was. However, it was even more helpful doing the homework assignments which forced us to think on our own, and taught us to formulate our ideas. (Yuil Eprim)

Few moments could compare with the thrill of discovery on my first day of class. The second year students trooped into the class, uncertain how to react to the new "Father from America". Father Fennell had left everything in its proper place for the new teacher in the new classroom next to the chemistry lab on the second floor. Prayers were said; the students sat down. One or two potential clowns made half-hearted attempts at reassuring their fellow-students in a language they thought the teacher did not know. I explained to the students what the course was all about, reminded them of the daily routine of the quiz on half a yellow sheet, and urged them to buy the Arabic chemistry text book. I picked it up, showed it to them, opened it and began reading from one of its first pages. Never in my life have I seen such a melange of emotions on any group of faces: astonishment, surprise, pleasure and perhaps even disappointment that "lek hadha moo amrikani !" (Beware! This is not an American.)



*An industrious biology lab*

That year was the year of the Suez Crisis. There was no school for weeks on end, and the Jesuit Community had to



manage without student tuition. In those financially difficult days, the Fathers were given the option between letting the school workers go or giving up tea, coffee, sugar, etc., until the crisis had passed.

To a man the Community chose to give up the ordinary staples of daily life so that they could keep the workers. The bleak breakfast of bread and water stands out as sharply in my memory as the day when the crisis finally ended. Never in those days did I hear a single complaint from anyone in the Jesuit Community. It was, and it will always remain in my mind, as one of their finest hours. (Fr. Marrow, B.C. '47)

### **Jesuit Influence on other schools**

Educators of elementary, secondary, and college levels showed great interest in Baghdad College and visited the school often, admitting that they had come to find programs and policies that they could use. Examples were the organization of graduation exercises, building planning, classroom and laboratory setup, teaching methods, dramatics, elocution, library, year book, and student poor relief. They were interested in the tiniest details of school organization, such as the school seal, format of diplomas, pencil sharpeners, and bubblers. Much of what they learned they did incorporate, or at least attempted to incorporate, into their own schools. There was scarcely a graduate of Higher Teacher and Queen Aliya College in the decade of the fifties that had not spent some time in a Baghdad College classroom observing classroom organization and pedagogical methods.

Baghdad College's influence in the Baghdad world of sports was much greater than one would expect from a small school. The Baghdad College varsity teams were the first to wear manufactured uniforms with the Arabic insignia. It was not merely that Baghdad College had been able to point the way in organization or in equipment, it was the deeper lesson of sportsmanship, qualities of generosity and fair play which sports encourage. A minister of education expressed his gratitude for Baghdad College participating in the city's track and field events with an inferior team. In doing this they demonstrated more interest in the success of the city's sports program than the prestige of personal victory. For many years Baghdad College teams in track and field were preeminent in Baghdad track meets. Fr. Hussey in a letter related the friendly and outgoing behavior that typified Baghdad College students which was acknowledged by neighbors.

Democracy is very much a reality on the Baghdad College campus. By precept and example, the students learn the God-

given dignity of each human being, whatever his accidents of birth or position. Rich boy and poor sit side by side in the same classroom, strive on equal terms for class leadership, win the privilege of wearing the gold and maroon uniforms of varsity teams by learning to work together. Day and night in the boarding school, they share everything together. A taxi driver stops in the city to offer the principal a free lift back to the campus. Although his son has just been dismissed from the school, he says: We love Baghdad College, because you are not afraid to give the same treatment to the son of a Prime Minister that you give to a taxi driver's son. (Fr. Hussey)

A number of Iraqi citizens noticed that Jesuits stuck to education and did not get involved in politics and they admired them for this. This had been clear during dangerous times of student demonstrations and city tensions. Several times the U.S. Information Service buildings had been attacked, the U.S. Embassy was protected by heavy guard, but Baghdad College had always been unprotected and unmolested. People pointed sharply to the facts that although frequently government schools locked their students in the school compounds, the students broke down the bars and marched away; whereas Baghdad College left the campus gates wide open, and the students remained on campus even after school hours. During the revolt of May, 1941, the Baghdad College faculty did not take refuge with other foreigners in either the American or British Embassy, but remained at the College, a gesture of confidence which the people of Iraq appreciated. This

was a constant for the Jesuits during their time in Baghdad in other similar eruptions which seemed dangerous to others but not to the Jesuits who had great confidence in the civility of Iraqi people even when they were justifiably angry.

Frequently Iraqis with no connection to the school pointed with pride to the beauty of the Baghdad College buildings and campus. Aware that buildings and campus were benefactions of generous Americans, they mingle pride of possession with gratitude for what these Americans were doing for their country.



*The three Ghantus brothers*



A grateful alumnus wrote a letter on June 8, 1984 to the B.J.A.A. (Baghdad Jesuit Alumni Association), to be published in its fourth yearbook, and at the time he was Minister and Head of the Iraqi Interests Section at the Embassy of India. He expresses gratitude for his Baghdad College training. Here is part of his letter.

Baghdad College has played an important role as a leading example looked upon by all levels, both in the educational and scientific processes. The influence of the Jesuit Fathers was not confined within the physical walls of Baghdad College, on the contrary it surpassed that of most of the high schools in Baghdad during that period, for Baghdad College and its students were the examples to be looked upon due to their high scientific levels, great sportsmanship spirit, and the distinct intimate relationship between the teacher and student, and among the students themselves. Hence, the Jesuit teachers were educators of excellent caliber, and undoubtedly ought to be proud of what they have accomplished in their educational, cultural, and scientific missions. These factors have collectively left durable marks on all the students who graduated from Baghdad College.

I have learned so many things, at that school, which have been of great benefit in my life later on. One of the most important of these things is to respect the other's opinion, and truthfully open the ground for discussion based on that principle. However, there are many governments, organizations, and individuals that, regrettably, still lack this principle and instead resort to intransigence, self-centeredness, and double standards. This conduct destroys societies from inside, as well as international relations in our world. (*Reunion Yearbook IV, 1984, p. 24*)

## Life with Father during these decades

### Crime and punishment

An imaginative penalty (but of questionable usefulness) consisted in raising a number like 6789 to the 12th power. Although some knew logarithms they found that this short cut did not work since they could never find logarithm tables accurate beyond the 7th decimal, but actually accuracy to the 48th decimal was needed. In any case penalties were boring, according to Waiel Hindo (B.C. '60, A.H. '64): "Discipline at Baghdad College most of



the time took the form of staying after school to write words from the dictionary or cleaning the baseball field from all papers."



*Jesuits enjoying the garden*

But sometimes it was possible to use preventative measures. In 1966 Fr. MacDonnell taught mathematics to all 160 seniors and Fr. Sheehan taught the same group physics (four classes of 40). Not far into the scholastic year Fr. Sheehan fell ill and had to

return to the U.S. so Fr. MacDonnell went to the mudeer and volunteered to take Fr. Sheehan's class along with his own. It meant that he would take 80 students at a time instead of 40 in the great sloped classroom of the Rice science building. He got to know the 160 students quite well and they him since they met nine times a week. So when the time came for the first exam, he waited until all 80 students filed into the great sloped room, watching each maneuvering for position. He said the prayer before class and then made an announcement. "Everyone now, pick up your chair, turn it 180 degrees so that you face the back of the room. Don't feel insulted, during exams I would not trust my own grandmother." There was surprise, followed by laughter, and then applause. He had done his homework. If anyone sits in such a sloped classroom and has normal vision he can copy from at least 12 people without moving his head, thereby arousing no suspicion. If those 12 sets of answers were not satisfactory, he could read 8 more with a slight twist of the head. Whereas with the chairs facing the back of the room, it would take an obvious 90 degree twist of the head to see only one paper. Fr. MacDonnell admitted afterward that he exaggerated, he *would* trust his grandmother.

Fr. Regan being gregarious by nature was often out at the basketball court while the local youngsters were playing and he got to know many of them. He was intrigued by what they were learning in their school.

I met Mahmud one day in front of the residence in Sulaikh. Like many youngsters he appeared to be studying while walking back and forth. Mahmud stopped me on this day and in broken but intelligible English asked if I would write a brief paragraph to his English teacher praising his use of the English language. I did as he requested. Some days passed



(Fr. Regan)



### Fr. Gerry at his post in the bookstore

The Fathers were treated with great respect on the public bus which traveled back and forth from Baghdad to Sulaikh. After all Fr. Guay was called the "mayor of Sulaikh" because he hired so many local workers for his buildings. Fr. MacDonnell found himself next to a friendly garrulous Arab gentleman who had great admiration for the Fathers as well as "that great American, General Montgomery". He trained race horses and invited Fr. MacDonnell to come to his ranch nearby and take a ride; the assumption being that all Americans ride horses.

Fr. MacDonnell enjoyed his conversation with Hamid but did not take the offer seriously. Any man who thought Montgomery was American probably did not have horses either. In any case he looked forward to riding a horse with as much enthusiasm as he would a trip to the dentist. A week later Hamid came to the front gate with a horse. He asked for Fr. MacDonnell, who by the way had never ridden a horse not to mention this Arabian steed pawing the ground. Somehow he managed to get on and with urging from Hamid's whip the horse galloped at great speed out into the desert with a frantic rider holding both reins and mane without a clue as to how to communicate with the beast. Eventually, perhaps due to thought of dinner at Hamid's ranch the horse turned around and galloped back to Hamid. Fr. MacDonnell has not ridden a horse since.

## The Floods

Water for beautiful campus gardens came from the Tigris through an elaborate system of dams, tunnels and ditches. Eventually, in the sixties, Fr. Loeffler built a large catch basin as an auxiliary water well for his many gardens on the 25 acre Sulaikh property. The money for the well was donated by a friend of Fr. Leo Shea. Sometimes there was too much water.



*B.C. neighboring refugees from the flood*

The well, however, was not always necessary. Torrential rains fell in late March of 1952 to add their volume to the rising waters of the Tigris, already swollen with the melting snows of the mountains of Turkey and Northern Iraq. The result was a flood scare beyond anything since Utna Pushteem of the Sumerian Gilgamesh Epic who had built his ark to escape the deluge. Baghdad College had a close call. The dikes burst above and below the city so that the surrounding desert became a sea reaching beyond the horizon. Our own dikes held so B.C. sustained little damage, but many neighbors were forced to flee their homes. The Jesuits spent several days raising everything portable off the ground. Foodstuffs and household supplies were carried to the second floor. The Community was divided into work committees and plans were made for any eventuality. When Fr. Sheehan seemed preoccupied with saving his notes on Latin poetry, some cynic suggested that they should be heaved into the river, being likely dry enough to absorb the superfluous water. Brother Parnoff constructed seaworthy rafts just in case. We did not have to test them, fortunately.

In 1954 the whole City of Baghdad became an island when the two rivers flooded. Many people lost their lives and possessions. Students from Baghdad College participated in carrying sand bags to the rivers banks. (Waiel Hindo, B.C. '60, A.H. '64)

## A not too curious American visitor

The Jesuits kept their distance from the American Embassy



personnel except for an occasional softball game between the "Fatheria" and the Embassy Marines. It was not that the Jesuits were being haughty and aloof, but rather it was a determination that American policies have nothing to do with the presence of the Jesuits in Iraq. Jesuits wished, by keeping their distance, to emphasize this. On the other hand the Embassy personnel, often came from that part of pluralistic America who were taught that Catholics and in particular Jesuits were up to no good. A case in point is an anecdote related by Fr. Anderson who uses an alias for "Senator X".

A group of American Senators were touring the Middle East to study conditions there at first hand. They deplaned at Baghdad on a Thursday afternoon and that evening our Ambassador held a reception in their honor. Prominent figures from various circles of Iraq's public life had been invited to meet them. In the course of the evening, the Iraqi Prime Minister was talking with Senator - I had better call him - Senator X. They were joined by Father Madaras, the Rector of Baghdad College; the Prime Minister put a friendly arm about the Rector's shoulder and paid this significant tribute to the school saying: "Senator X, when you return to the United States, I want you to thank the American people for having sent these Fathers to us, to help educate our young men. They are conducting the finest school in Iraq". It was all the more effective because only a few hours before, the worthy Senators had dismissed a suggestion that a visit to Baghdad College would be worth their while. (Fr. Anderson, Archives file #510)

Fr. Madaras had many jobs, many of which were administrative. When in 1953 he was 'promoted' (as the faculty used to say) back into the classroom, he needed to be certified by the Iraqi Government as a teacher again. The details of his "sad story" are related in the *Al Baghdadi* newsletter with the sub-title What Price Glory?

### **What Price Glory?**

Among all the Baghdadis Fr. Madaras was the oldest Jesuit in point of service. He together with the late Bishop Rice were the real Founding Fathers of the College, the first American Jesuits to arrive, back in March, 1932. We mention this, not to date Fr. Madaras, nor to give the impression that he was around when the postman was still delivering clay tablets to Abraham down in Ur of the Chaldees. We just wish to stress the fact that Fr. Madaras was no stranger in these parts.





He slipped back into the classroom in 1953 after years of administrative responsibility including terms as Superior of the Iraq Mission, Rector of Baghdad College and first Superior of the House of Arabic Studies. His name was accordingly submitted to the Government on our list of teachers. That is a little precaution required of all Private Schools to insure that none but properly qualified teachers will mold the young Iraqi mind. You might not believe it, but he was asked to report at the Ministry of Education to prove his competence to teach at Baghdad College. Of course, he got an unmerciful ribbing from the rest of us. But his students were indignant that there should be even a minor official in the Ministry who does not know Fr. Madaras. For they were very proud of their eminent teacher who, by the way, was the founder of this (*Al Baghdadi*) journal at Baghdad and its sole editor and contributor for nearly a dozen years. (*Al Baghdadi Newsletter*, 10/53 p. 3)



*Jesuit guests at a couzzi of Shaikh Famar al-Faisal 3/26/53*

### **The mysterious American timer**

In 1956, during Al-Hikma's first year (on the Baghdad College campus) one of the faculty members was Fr. MacDonnell who ran the Thermodynamics and Mechanics laboratories and even wrote the manuals. Some of the experiments required large chunks of ice. On the lab mornings he would call the home of the janitor and ask him to bring a block of ice to work with him that day. He had memorized the proper sentence and would carefully say; "gib ana rub' calib thelage bil muctaba sar thman u nus, min fudlik". He was always disconcerted with the response: "Hello Father" and wondered how could they tell it was him.

Baghdad's electrical supply contrasted with America's riot only in voltage (220 instead of 110) but also in cycles (50 instead of 60). As a result in Iraq, motors made in the U.S. ran at five sixths the speed they were meant to. Fr. MacDonnell used a timer for an electrical spark in an acceleration experiment, and instead





of sending out 10 sparks per second it sent out 8.33 (five sixths of ten) sparks. The students were at a loss as to why Americans would use such bewildering numbers.

### **The Imposter**

The Baghdad Jesuits enjoyed a well-deserved reputation for hospitality. Many visitors, religious as well as lay, were given room and board as they journeyed through Iraq, especially during vacation periods when groups could sleep in empty classrooms. In the Fall of 1957 a gentleman came and took advantage of this generosity. He was blind, dressed as a priest and claimed to be of the Malabar rite. Fr. LaBran organized his Sodality to help, and raised \$800 to help this poor man. Bro. Foley was suspicious of his request for narcotics from the infirmary, so was less generous. A month after he departed a letter from Rome warned the Jesuits of this man because he was an impostor.

A month later a group of Jesuits while on a Christmas pilgrimage to Bethlehem saw this same man, but because of the crowd were unable to reach him to inquire about his behavior. They did the next best thing and informed the Franciscan Custodian of the Holy Land who was superior of the hostel where most pilgrims stayed. He dealt with the matter immediately and brought the culprit to justice.

### **The scheduling board**

In 1956, there appeared in the assistant principal's office a 5 foot by 4 foot wooden frame embedded with 810 small nails from which hung numbered and color-coded tags which would be used for scheduling classes. Fr. Pelletier relates its origin, and also relates a few more items of these decades.

The Baghdad College scheduling board was way ahead of its time. The previous scheduling method required five men listening and recording a litany read by a sixth man of all possible combinations of possible class assignments according to subject, year, class time, teacher and classroom - one man for each item. The idea was to avoid missing classes and not have two teachers in the same classroom together. The tedious and confusing sessions lasted at least 12 hours, thereby requiring 60 man-hours of work. Once one arrangement was finished it would have to be done over again and again since subtle, but serious errors would creep in and a different arrangement was needed; e.g. a teacher (or a whole class of students) would be in two places at once, or fourth year would have 6 (or 3) classes a week instead of 5.

A simpler solution occurred to Fr. MacDonnell who drove 810 nails into a board lined up in 27 columns and 30 rows:



the rows matching the number of classes and the columns matching the number of teachers. Then distinct colored tags were assigned for distinct subjects; e.g. five red (for mathematics) tags marked with a 4 represented the 5 classes per week the fourth year students would have. Since there were only 5 tags and all were used, the fourth year would have exactly the required math classes and neither teacher nor students would have to bilocate. As with all great inventions, he was told that it would never work and the old way was better - it worked so well that we eventually made a second one for the Mudeer's office. One drawback to the new method involved the thin colored paper tags we used. One day, a janitor came to clean the room and decided to open a window - that night a wind came up and wiped out the schedule. Resourceful as we were, however, we quickly got it restored. (Fr. Pelletier)

### **A coach's conflict of interest**

In the late sixties football seemed to replace baseball as the most popular sport since it was a more natural sport for the students and due in part to Fr. Loeffler, who put up the goals. We were able to map out four football fields so intramural contests were started and championships played. All-star teams between years were chosen and I remember one mother calling the mudeer (Fr. Powers) saying how utterly distraught her son was because he did not make the All-star team. We added him to the roster to keep peace in the family. One afternoon, we formed a team of first year students and took them to play a local school run by the British. During the game, one of our opponents hurt his leg and he came over to me and said: "Father, take me out." I said that I couldn't because I wasn't his coach - perhaps he thought the Fathers had special influence. (Fr. Pelletier)

### **Busing**

Our fleet of buses made two shifts everyday - they were well maintained and stood out in the city traffic - one parent suggested that we erect shelters at the various pick-up points around the city so that our students could be protected from the weather - needless to say, we did not do this. The penalty for misbehavior on the school buses was not being allowed to ride the bus for a day or two - each student had an assigned seat (three to a seat) - this was a major job for the Assistant Mudeer in compiling seat positions and lists. More than once, a misbehaving student would hide on the floor to escape notice so that he would not have to take the long time-consuming bus



ride home on the Amana Bus. I'm sure that many got away with it, but we also caught our share. (Fr. Pelletier)

## Some spectacular events

### The 1957 Visit of the King on Baghdad College's 25th Anniversary

His Majesty, King Faisal II of Iraq, paid an official visit to Baghdad College and Al-Hikma University of Baghdad April 1, 1957 to congratulate the school on its 25th anniversary. In the Royal Suite with His Majesty were the Regent Abdul-Ilah; Mr. Tahsin Qadri, Master of Ceremonies at the Royal Palace; Mr. Abdullah Bakar, Assistant Master of Ceremonies at the Royal



*King Faisal II's visit to Baghdad College*

Palace; Mr. Khalil Kanna, Minister of Education in the Iraq Cabinet; Mr. Abdul-Hamid Khadhimn, Director General of Education in Iraq; Mr. Majid Al-Douri, Director of Education in Baghdad, and several Aides-de-Camp of His Majesty.

The Royal Party was met at the Jesuit Residence and welcomed by Fr. Michael J. McCarthy, S.J., acting superior of the Baghdad Mission. After a short reception the guests were led on a conducted tour of the campus, beginning with a visit to the Chapel of the Sacred Heart. Coming out of the Chapel they were greeted by more than 750 students, lined up on the athletic field. His Majesty marched through the lines in a colorful procession to the administration building, where he was met by Fr. Robert J. Sullivan, S.J., principal of Baghdad College, and after a short inspection he proceeded to the Rice Science building, where he manifested a keen interest in the science laboratories and classes. He was then conducted to the Cronin building, temporary home of Al-Hikma University, where he was greeted by Fr. Ryan, Dean of Al-Hikma University.

The engineering students were doing thermodynamics experiments in the physics lab of the Rice Science building under the direction of Fr. MacDonnell, who had previously warned them about the danger of repeating experiment #8 on the vapor pressure of water. Water boils at room temperature after a





vacuum pump lowers the pressure over the water. As the pressure is allowed to increase more heat is required for it to boil. After ten stages the water is 100 degrees C. If the experiment was started again (by turning the vacuum pump on again) before the apparatus had cooled down, the apparatus would explode.



*King Faisal II enjoyed the labs of Baghdad College*

Needless to say, as King Faisal came to the laboratory the student assigned to #8, had just finished his experiment and had nothing to show the guest. As King Faisal approached his station the student, more eager than prudent, turned on the pump - alas, too soon - there followed a loud explosion accompanied by flying glass and debris. No one was injured except for the bruised ego of an embarrassed student, but all present came away with great respect for the alacrity of the Palace Guard who surrounded the King with drawn weapons that seemed to come from nowhere.



*For the visit of the King, the students assembled on the chapel lawn*





At the conclusion of his visit King Faisal appeared before the entire student body. Mr. Khalil Kanna, Minister of Education, addressed the students, and showing that he understood Jesuit education, declared the following day a holiday - a venerable Jesuit custom on the occasion of visiting dignitaries.

### **The July 14 Revolution**

The Revolution came unexpectedly for the scholars at Baghdad College, most of whom apparently were not effected. Among those who were effected deeply was Waiel Hindo who described how he spent his day.

It was about 6:30 on a Monday morning of the fourteenth of July, 1958. I had just finished serving a six o'clock Mass at the Sacred Heart Church of Baghdad College and was returning home to Sulaikh, a few blocks away from the college. As I approached the house of a class mate of mine, Fikrat Al-Khouri, I heard the loud rumblings of martial music and nationalistic songs. He was cleaning his car, and he told me that during the early hours of the morning the army had staged a coup d'état, the King [Faisal II] had been killed, and my father, Brigadier General of the Third Division, had been arrested. I bolted home where my mother confirmed the rumor, and listened to the news broadcasts on the radio. The units of the Third Division had orchestrated the coup, which would come to be called the *July Fourteenth Revolution*, led by Brigadier Abdul Karim (Kareem) Qasim. Brigadier Qasim, the Leader of the Revolution would become Prime Minister (though he never became President).

What effect did this have on Baghdad College? Baghdad College students had from the start been a diverse lot. Practically every religion practiced in Iraq and every income group - wealthy, poor, middle class - were to be found. There were students whose fathers were in positions of power in the country as well as students whose fathers and who themselves counted themselves in the opposition to the monarchy. Thus when the dust of the Revolution had settled, only the internal relationships among students had changed, and the composition of the student body remained the same. Those who had opposed the government came to the fore, while those previously privileged fell into disfavor. Moreover, the rapid recognition of the Revolution by the United States that very August, prevented a backlash against the American Jesuits who established and administered the school, so life at B.C. continued smoothly for some years after this first upheaval.

During the first year after the Revolution (1958-59), the



school year was marked by two seminal events. The first was the formation of the first student union at Baghdad College. It was this same student union which would play a significant role in future coups and the eventual Iraqization of B.C. and Al-Hikma (1968-69). The second was a series of decrees announced by the new-formed government, universally promoting all students to the next grade, regardless of failure in the examinations. Baghdad College quietly refused to honor these decrees and did not promote failing students. (Wael Hindo, B.C. '60, A.H. '64)



*The graduates of 1957*



## Chapter 6

# Learning with Imagination: Iraqi Style



*"The world is charged with the Grandeur of God!"  
Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J. (1844-1889)*

### Summary: 37 years of Baghdad College programs

There was a wide variety of interests among the faculty as well as the student body which was evident in the Baghdad College programs. There were scholarly projects such as the science, the debating and the elocution clubs. The English language labs opened the door for continuing education of the city's many English teachers. The spiritual programs included service to the poor, the Apostolate of Prayer, the annual Novenas of Grace and Sodalitys who were especially zealous in Catechetical work and religious celebrations, for example, the unique event called "Petroleum Sunday". A much needed Christian Center was founded for Baghdad's youth and the Minor Seminary was entrusted to the Jesuits at Sulaikh. Ever present were Iraqi laity like Iraq's saintly *Sit Ameana* (introduced later in this chapter) who inspired both students as well as Jesuits.

Among the social programs, Parents' Day and June graduations ranked rather high. Other social events which were less organized included Jesuit visits to wakes and to Christian and Muslim families during their feasts. There were also efforts to form a caring community so that the lay faculty would not feel left out of things. The athletic programs were probably the most organized and predictable of all the Baghdad College events.

The Jesuits spent much of their time planning for the future

and were called upon to investigate plans for other educational efforts in the Middle East. Busy as the men were there had always been the emphasis on Jesuit scholarship. There was an increase in momentum for planned improvements and new programs in the last decade since there were more Jesuits and therefore more time to consider questions and problems which arose during this engrossing era. Like the annual rings of a tree, the growth stages of Baghdad College were marked starting with the small school in cramped, rented quarters off Rashid Street to the 25 acre beautiful, well-kept, suburban campus with many striking buildings in Sulaikh, but the growth was measured by more than increased enrollments and the buildings. To the remarkable material progress of Baghdad College must be added the numerous activities, athletic and scholastic that have been included in the school program as guides for the varied interests of the ever-expanding student body.



*1957 assembly of the whole student body*



## Academic programs

Of prime importance in any Jesuit school is the intellectual life. The first President of any Jesuit university was Peter Canisius, S.J. (who was later canonized). He had been elected President of the University of Ingolstadt, Germany in 1550 and St. Ignatius told him to accept the position. He founded 18 colleges in as many cities with strong emphasis on academic excellence, insisting: "better a college without a chapel than a college without a library." His intellectual spirit was emulated at Baghdad College which could also boast of a superb chapel.

### The Scientific Society

The Scientific Society met each week during the school year. Lectures were delivered by members of the science faculty and by students, and one meeting each month was devoted to the discussion of business affairs and guest speakers frequently from Baghdad University. Projects such as weather observation, mapping sun spots, geological surveying, semi-conductors as a source of energy and short films on astronomy, biology, chemistry, radio and television. During the year the members of the Society enjoyed several holiday picnics. A small bulletin was issued at regular intervals to the student body concerning these topics.

On the campus it was one of the most popular societies numbering about 40 students who had maintained an average above 75 in the sciences. The purpose of such a Society was (a) to increase knowledge and to foster interest in science, (b) to bring to the attention of those interested recent developments in

scientific fields, and (c) to offer to the individual members of the Society an opportunity to express their own thoughts on scientific subjects by delivering papers written by themselves. There were four officers: president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. All meetings were held in one of Fr. Guay's beautifully designed sloped classrooms "S-28" located in the Rice Science building.



*Fairfield University donation:  
a Newtonian reflector telescope*



### Baghdad's first TV science program

Television came to Baghdad earlier than most countries (in 1956) and the early programming relied on old American movies. In an effort to diversify, the station directors asked Fr. Sullivan for some ideas. Fr. MacDonnell of the physics department was invited to present the first science program on Iraqi TV in 1957. It was an hour long program of physics demonstrations and the school had recently acquired some wonderful equipment. Fr. MacDonnell got together five senior students who would not get rattled and who understood and could explain the physics principles involved.

The Baghdad television tower was visible from a generous distance, but finding an entrance to the barn-like studio in the unpretentious surroundings of Karkh (a section of Baghdad across the Tigris River from Baghdad College) presented a difficult challenge. A dust storm was threatening when a troupe of five B.C. seniors, eager to display their lab technique, arrived for their hour long program in which they would demonstrate the principles of electrostatics. Inside the studio was an air of great mobility which was to be the keynote of the evenings performance; curtain backdrops were being rolled and unrolled for the best effect, three new 'Pye' TV cameras were being maneuvered about with great abandon, while carpenters were carefully nailing planks to saw-horses to provide a demonstration table.



*Fr. McCarthy describes the Testla coil*

Baghdad College's physics experiments made up the first item on the evening program of "Telifizion al Baghdad". Sameer Busha asked for a ground wire to protect both the equipment and the studio, but the electrician insisted that there was 'mu ground' (no ground wire) - which only meant that this merited more discussion than a simple request. All hands in the studio proved to be a very amiable lot to work with, especially the camera crew, who reflected the degree of enthusiasm and interest expected of the TV audience.

The Wimshurst machine discharging sparks or lighting neon tubes had its own fascination, but when Nabeel Khurdachi used it as a source of charge to make the "dolls" of pith dance between aluminum plates, it provided so much activity, camera #1 was reluctant to leave it for a demonstration so prosaic as charging an electroscope. "Electrostatic wind" returned motion to the program but interest so lagged during Faraday's ice pail experiment that the view suddenly changed to the blackboard where there was at least some activity; Zaki Jamil was diagramming his explanation of the demonstration.

The management apprehensively expected some sort of religious commercial with the appearance of incense smoke but were relieved to see the Cottrell precipitator which deposits charged particles on an oppositely charged plate. Next Nazih Muhammad demonstrated the principles of the Geiger counter privately to those fortunate enough to be in the studio, because at the time cameraman #1 was treating the general TV audience to some fine action shots of Harith Rassam erasing the blackboard, which apparently seemed more interesting than the Geiger counter.

As is true in most electricity demonstrations the climax came with old faithful - the Testla coil. The snap of lightning was loud enough and the flash sharp enough to jar cameraman #3 back to a respectable distance, but he didn't miss the burning paper "house" and Zaki Jamil's final explanation of the principle of the lightning rod. With the last flash of homemade lightning, the program ended for two reasons: first, quite by coincidence, it was planned to end there, and second, the electricity in the studio suddenly went off. Under the circumstances the only deterrent to a sly and rapid retreat was the phantom of the alert cameraman #1 with an eye for action covering the exit in case the current was restored. It was a relief to find that it was not the equipment but a dust storm that was responsible for the electrical difficulty. All departed with the cordial invitation to return again with more fascinating demonstrations.





## Mathematics Contest

Fr. MacDonnell started a mathematics club with frequent guest speakers from Baghdad University and Al-Hikma and had mathematics projects for the members to research and present. He also designed a mathematics classroom on the first floor east end of the Rice Science building. In the room were many mathematical artifacts and along the wall was a giant IBM scroll concerning the history of mathematics.

During one of the Parents' Days he was rather taken aback when a parent pointed out that the scroll did not give the proper credit to the ancient Arab mathematicians. The parent was right. It was embarrassing since the Arabs had contributed so much to mathematics, not least of which was that zero is not merely a place holder but a genuine number. Fr. MacDonnell did not point out on the scroll this one item: "The Arab mathematicians contributed ZERO to mathematics", since somehow this did not seem appropriate at the moment.

Each year, after 1964, all fourth and fifth year students were invited to compete with each other for two hours of solving problems in algebra, trigonometry and geometry. About 30 courageous students would come to the mathematics classroom in the Rice Building and Fr. MacDonnell would administer the exam of 15 questions, then later correct the answers and choose the three students who showed the best grasp of mathematics.

On the occasion of the 1966 contest a remarkable thing occurred. After sitting for the contest, one of the students went home to find that his father had been killed by an intruder. Unaccountably the boy was arrested as a suspect and was brought to trial a month later. It so happened that he had just finished a two hour physics lab just before the math contest with, of all people, Fr. MacDonnell.

The murder had taken place about noon so Fr. MacDonnell was the key witness at the trial. He convinced the judge that the student could not have committed the crime because he was with him from 11:30 to 3:30 doing experiments in a physics lab and then right after this taking the mathematics exam. The student was immediately released, but only after Fr. MacDonnell was able to convince the judge that it was a reasonable thing to believe that a student would voluntarily take a mathematics exam. The headlines of an Arabic newspaper read: "Jesuit resolves the conscience of accused slayer." (*el-Emel*, January 30, 1967, pp. 1,4) Later the real murderer was found. The student was very grateful but did not win the contest.



*An eloquent elocution*

### **The Debating Society**

The Debating Society's membership was restricted to students in fourth and fifth years. Bi-weekly debates were held in the library reading room and were attended by many students and faculty. Topics chosen from daily school life as well as world events were debated in both English and Arabic. They were warmly contested and it was always the conclusion of the audience that excellent speakers were emerging. The goals of the Debating Society were: to develop a young man's power of expression and offer him fundamental training in public speaking; to familiarize him with the apt reason and rules of logic, with cogent replies, with forceful attacks and to inculcate, through its meetings, the principles and practices of parliamentary law and at the same time to broaden his outlook on all questions of a debatable nature. The enthusiasm of the Baghdad College students for debating was always impressive and augured well for their futures as professional men. In 1948 the first prize debate was held, and its evident success assured its continuance as an annual event in the school activities program. A graduate recalls the debating sessions.

One big advantage of this activity was to train senior students to take part in open discussions amongst a group of interested individuals in that particular topic, as attendance was voluntary. In the process, if the discussions got too hot to handle, it was the duty of the vice president/chairman to steer the conversations into a useful outlet, hence avoiding hurling chairs, and stationery at each other!

(Luay Zebouni, B.C. '67)

### **The Language laboratory**

The Language laboratory of Mr. Comille Tebsherany and Fr. Robert Sullivan proved to be a remarkable and pioneer adventure



for Baghdad College. It proved very effective in helping the language teachers do their job. Both men realized that learning a language is primarily learning to distinguish, understand and reproduce accurately the sound system and not merely the grammatical elements. Language skills included not only reading, and writing but also understanding and speaking. Both men made significant contributions to the field of teaching English throughout the Arab world by experimentation with different types of laboratory equipment. Comille Tebsherany explained the program and its goals: to develop aural perception and familiarity; to inculcate mastery of the basic and troublesome structures; to assist in the ability to read rapidly and accurately; to develop aural-oral ability; to specialize in pronunciation drills (for multi-lingual areas) and to begin work on advanced literature.



*Fr. Sullivan's language lab*

Mr. Tebsherany warned that: "A language laboratory in and of itself is not a universal panacea, it is not a substitute for a good teacher. But effectively used, it can be instrumental in aiding the language teacher and in accelerating the rate of progress in learning. It can reduce the teaching load. It can ensure that the beginning students are exposed to the sound system of a language as it comes from native speakers". Fr Decker recalls how satisfying the work was.

Fr. Sullivan, Comille Tebsherany and I took care of the language program at the intermediate level. My knowledge of Arabic really helped a lot in this. It was wonderful to see how the boys improved so much in using the language. We also were able to conduct a program for the native teachers of English in the government schools, to enable them to be better models for their students. All of this was extremely fulfilling and I still miss it very much. The happiest years of my Jesuit life were the years I spent in Baghdad and I will always be grateful for this opportunity. (Fr. Decker)

## **Teachers education by Baghdad College**

During the summer of 1964, at the request of the Ministry of Education, seminar courses in English were given at Baghdad College to Iraqi teachers of English. The announcement sent out by the Ministry of Education stated that the Baghdad College facilities would permit us to accept 140 candidates and over 300 applications were received from every section of the country. After a preliminary proficiency examination, two groups were formed, of primary school teachers, and of intermediate and secondary school teachers, with men and women in each group and a total starting enrollment of 91. The two separate courses ran for six weeks, with a three-hour session five days a week.

On August 22, 1966, Fr. Sullivan set to work installing six passive laboratories (labs used only for hearing, not for speaking) in schools of the Baghdad Ministry of Education. These labs were to be part of an experiment in the teaching of English according to modern methods. The installations were made possible through a grant of the Ford Foundation to the Ministry. The teachers in this experimental program were selected by the Ministry from the large number of those who had been trained in the seminars given at Baghdad College. The texts had been specially written for Arabic speaking students by Mr. Comille Tebsherany of the Baghdad College staff, and were successfully tried out at the College. If this worked, the program would be extended to all government schools throughout Iraq. Of the six schools chosen two were for girls and four for boys, in widely separated parts of Baghdad. The program actually got under way at the beginning of the 1966 academic year and the initial reaction had been very favorable. (More is found about this in the *New England Province Newsletter*, Sept-Oct '66 p. 23.)

At the request of the Ministry of Education, Baghdad College would conduct another seminar for the training of Iraqi teachers of English. This six-month session had been scheduled to start in November, 1966, and this would have been the fifth seminar to be conducted at the College. All indications pointed to an increasing enrollment.

In September, 1965, at the request of the Ford Foundation, Baghdad College inaugurated an English Language Program in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to provide training in English to the civil servants of the Saudi Government. The program was centered in the Institute of Public Administration and was financed by the Saudi Government. The complete course consisted of nine levels, each running for 13 weeks, for a total of 130 hours. A passive language laboratory was installed at the Institute, and formal instruction began September 11, 1966. Fr. Robert Sullivan made



periodic visits to Riyadh to supervise the execution of the program. More information about this program is found in the *New England Province Newsletter*, Jan-Feb '66 p. 16. This Riyadh Program ended its third session July 16, 1966, with 106

candidates successfully completing the requirements of the various courses in which they were enrolled. On August 6, the fourth session began with 176 candidates enrolled in the five levels of instruction being offered.



*A reception for the English teachers' seminar*

### **Experimental mathematical program**

During the year 1967-68 a modest start was made in an experimental "2A" section of more gifted second year students using the UNESCO research material which had been developed for the improvement of mathematical instruction. It was taught by Fr. MacDonnell and differed sufficiently from the regular curriculum to require a separate section that could stay together for the rest of their time at Baghdad College - 3A, 4A and 5A.

The matter covered in this initiation into modern mathematics included set theory, group theory, Venn diagrams, complex numbers, properties of numbers and properties of operators. The rules for logic, syllogisms, sorites and truth table took a good portion of time. A geometrical analysis of symmetries was also treated.

It was also necessary to make sure that the students did not ignore the government exam syllabus (containing only traditional (though easier) mathematics) or else they would be unfairly judged in these all-important exams. It was important that they not be incorrectly classified and thus unable to enter the higher school of their choice if they knew the wrong mathematics. Only volunteer students who could manage both new and old mathematical approaches were accepted into this section. The program was discontinued after the Jesuits left Iraq.





## Religious programs

Distrust between Christians and Muslims resulted from many centuries of conquest and massacres, but on the Baghdad College campus Christians and Muslims found a place where real friendships could develop as well as a deeper understanding of each other's religion. An example of this appreciation is found in a moving letter sent by a Muslim parent to Fr. John Owens, S.J., after he had given a homily to the student body about death, knowing that he himself was dying of cancer and had only a few months to live.

Rarely have I encountered in my life a faith as deep as yours. In Islam, a basic essential in Faith is a complete acceptance of God's will. To accept it in the peace and serenity that you have shown, Father, is rare indeed. I want you to know your spirit in accepting God's will is an inspiring and enriching experience not only to your boys but to us parents, too. To know that in the turmoil of our modern times there still exist people like you, gives us hope for a better world.

(A Muslim Parent)

Another example comes from the reports made by Raymond Etteldorf in his book *The Catholic Church in the Middle East*.

The non-Christians are not allowed to attend the classes in religion, but for the Christian students a thorough grounding in religion is, of course, given its due emphasis. An example of the results of this training was portrayed to me while I was there. I was told the story of Sabah Jadun, one of the students who earlier in the year had died a saintly death at the age of nineteen.

Sabah was very popular with his fellow students, a star on the basketball team; he was a daily communicant, a zealous member of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, and an honor student. He told the members of his family that he had bound himself to a manner of life so dedicated to God they were to regard him in the future as "a priest with a necktie." Stricken with a brain tumor and learning that his illness might bring blindness, more intensive suffering, or death, he said simply, "Whatever God wants is all right with me."

(Etteldorf, 1959 p. 132)

In fact the story does not end there. Sabah's close friend, Usam Ismael, a Muslim, spent much of his time and energy that

semester collecting money from the other students to send Sabah to England for an operation. This operation was unsuccessful, but it underscores the friendship and loyalty that existed between Muslim and Christian classmates. The campus brought together Christians and Muslims on an equal footing, expressing in a way the spirit of the new constitution of Iraq, breaking away from the classical mold in which Christians were considered inferior in status. A case in point was Sabah who had a lasting effect on his classmates who left this memento of him in their 1956 *Al Iraqi* Yearbook.

In picture after picture of school activities Sabah was seen taking part. Because of his prominent role in athletics and in the Sodality he captured the imagination of many boys in the lower classes and was their ideal and inspiration. His classmates of the graduating class learned to know him through the years they shared failure and triumph together, but did not

realize how precious his friendship had become until he was threatened with the illness that proved fatal. "Being made perfect in a short space he fulfilled a long time" is the comment from the Book of Wisdom which we apply to Sabah to reconcile ourselves to the loss we have suffered in his untimely death. Teachers and fellow students are all better men for having known him and hope to find him again in eternal peace that is rest in God. (*Al Iraqi*, 1956, p. 12)



*Sabah Jadun, 1937-1956*

All members of the Baghdad College community, both Jesuit and alumni have their own edifying stories of Faith. Fr. Crowley celebrated Mass in the various Baghdad churches occasionally, as did the other Fathers. He writes about an event that impressed him. This story is followed by lasting spiritual lessons treasured by two of Baghdad College's early graduates.

During my first month in Iraq in 1953 I was standing outside St. Raphael's Chapel after Sunday Mass waiting for my



ride back to Baghdad College. No one else was around and all the congregation had left. Two veiled Moslem women came along and asked "Wain Miriam?" [Where is Mary?] First I thought they were looking for one of the Christian women but soon realized they were trying to find the statue of the Virgin Mary. My ride came and I left them there praying before the statue. Before this I had heard of Muslim expectant mothers who wanted to have their babies at St. Raphael's Clinic. (Fr. Crowley)

I graduated from medical College in 1970 and qualified as a surgeon in 1977. In 1979 I finished my training in Urology and in addition to this I have been doing Kidney Transplant operations since 1989. I am a hard working surgeon working no less than 12 hours a day and six days in the week. I mention these things about myself since they have a direct relation to what I have learned from my years at Baghdad College.

Fr. Loeffler and Fr. Gerry taught me how to work hard. Fr. Loeffler used to spend a long time gardening while Fr. Gerry used to spend a lot of his extra time in teaching us in the Biology Lab. This helped to shift my mind towards live objects and then medicine. To be a good surgeon, you need to be a faithful man. Although I attended all the Catechism and religion studies in Baghdad College in addition to all the spiritual events, I believe that my faith became stronger when I met (bless his soul) Fr. Owens a few days before he died. He was suffering from cancer in 1965. He said to me: "Shawgi, I feel very happy that I am going to meet Jesus and his mother Mary, and I hope if you keep on like this we will meet one day altogether." I felt his strength in his faith and this helped me since then when I was a medical student till now to fight all the way and keep my faith as strong as possible. (Shawgi George Gazala, B.C. '64)

A.M.D.G. [Ad Majoram Dei Gloriam - For the Greater Glory of God] was a motto which I and many others wrote on top of every project and even exam papers. I have taken part in every spiritual event that took place at the College and also other places when they were run by one of the Fathers in either the Chaldean or Syrian Church. There were only a few that were selected from every class to join the Sodality. We used to have an open retreat at the beginning of every scholastic year and I can never forget the sermons given to us by Fr. Merrick. He gave them with great enthusiasm and passion deep from his heart. After our graduation we used to





join Fr. Merrick in a weekend retreat somewhere in a convent or church and spend two or three days in full meditation and prayer away from the hassle of home and the city. We used to regard Fr. Merrick as a model of sanctity and holiness and I have never forgotten him throughout my life. (George Rahim, B.C. '37)

### Service to the poor

Baghdad College students were quite generous and this was evident in many ways, one of which was the annual play put on to raise money for the poor. Sometimes the boys were able to realize I.D. 200 dinars from the proceeds. Also every Saturday boys were assigned to take up a collection in every class and by Christmas they had brought in the sum of 120

dinars which amounted to approximately I.D. 10 dinars per week. During a typical spring these boys really showed their stuff in the "grand drive for the poor" when they gathered 1000 pieces of clothing, 25 dinars in the jar which was placed outside the Mudeer's office, and three sheep. "There were always competitions among the classes about who would top the list in the missions and poor collections."

(Waiel Hindo, B.C. '60, A.H. '64)



*Collectors for the poor*

Ameena Hermiz Jammo led an exemplary Christian life and was an inspiration to the Jesuits who worked with her. During the summer she would travel the mountainous remote areas of Northern Iraq to the little Chaldean villages to prepare the children for First Communion. She would spend her modest teaching salary helping poor families, purchasing bolts of cloth from which she and the local women would hand sew the clothes for children's First Communion.

After she was transferred to teach in Baghdad, she began to spend most of her time after school assisting the local pastors





and nuns of the suburban churches in religious education and caring for the sick in their homes or in hospitals. She also visited the less-religious families to persuade them to participate in religious functions, and urged them to send their children to the Catholic religious education classes in the local churches.

"Sit Ameena" as she was called by associates and friends ("Sit" is a respectful title roughly translated as "Teacher") was the director and spiritual leader of the *Sodality of the Army of Mary* of Baghdad.

Despite her advanced years during the 60's and 70's (calendar years exactly matched her age - being born in 1900- ) and regardless of the weather (winter's cold and rain or summer's burning heat), she would still go to Baghdad's remotest suburbs (riding several buses and walking) to participate in religious functions. (Ramzi Hermiz, B.C. '48)

Br. Foley answered the needs of the poor neighbors and Fr. Fennell had a very creative way of collecting money to give to the poor. He sent out to American Jesuit schools asking for used Christmas cards which would be thrown out.

Collections for the poor, taken up regularly in all classes once a week, have always been the custom at Baghdad College. During a war-time, in 1942, an appeal was made to relatives and friends in America, to send us old Christmas cards of every kind. When they arrived, Fr. Fennell, who ran the bookstore, and some of the students went to work with scissors, cutting off the names signed on the bottom of the cards. The cards were given new envelopes, and were put up for sale in the bookstore. As there were no cards for sale in Baghdad during that war-year, the cards went fast, and at a good price!

Some cards had the names still on them of American donors on the bottom of the card. It did not matter, the boys bought them anyway, signed their own name under these names and sent them to their teachers. So the greeting at the end changed from: MERRY CHRISTMAS, from JIM AND MARY KELLEY.  
to: MERRY CHRISTMAS, from JIM AND MARY KELLEY.

(signed) Abdullah

Enough money was collected to buy 22 chicken dinners for the poor that Christmas. (Fr. Fennell)

Aside from the educational and religious effects we had at Baghdad College, also our social commitment to the local poor were effective on having a good impression of our Mission. The



backyard clinic that I ran for the poor I think had a very positive effect on the neighborhood. The treatments and medicines were as primitive as could be, yet it meant much to people who needed that attention. (Br. Foley)



*Fr. Morgan's Apostolate of Prayer*

### **Apostleship of Prayer**

Baghdad College students had always been strong in their participation in the Apostleship of Prayer, a world-wide organization of prayer and good works. The weekly meetings were held each Monday in which the members arranged devotional programs for every occasion. Several interesting talks on the Sacred Heart, the Twelve Promises, the Monthly Intention, and related subjects were presented by the members of the group. First Friday Mass celebrated each month in Saint Joseph's Church was part of the regular program and hundreds of families had been consecrated to the Sacred Heart. Each member was a promoter in the League and by his fidelity to the ideals of this devotion he endeavored to improve his own religious life and to influence others by his good example. The work is here described by Fr. Morgan and Luay, one of his charges.

Our work used to cover periods after school and included useful discussions, preparation of spiritual material and an opportunity to make new friends. There were discussions of Catechism and I found Fr. Morgan a true Spiritual Scholar. We used to prepare and distribute the monthly prayer cards which I still keep a few, as treasured collections. (Luay Zebouni, B.C. '67)

By the end of our stay in Iraq, we were distributing as I



recall, some 6000 cards each month, as well as thirty silk screen posters "hand made" on the top floor of the Cronin building, with the help of students, who also helped in the mailing and delivery of the cards. It was sometimes difficult even with our Arabic experts to come out with the exact nuance the English I submitted intended. I recall one month when the intention to be prayed for was the "proper use of communications media" and one student asked me why we were praying for "buses and trains". With the help of Fr. Dick McCarthy and Faraj Raffouli for Arabic translations, we began printing (at Thomas Press) and circulating to various churches and schools in Iraq these "morning offering" cards of prayer, with a bit of doctrine on the back - quoting from Church sources, and after 1963 from the Second Vatican Council then in session. (Fr. Morgan)

### **Novena of Grace**

Following a long Jesuit tradition, the Novena of Grace is held between March 4th to the 12th - nine days of prayer in honor of St. Francis Xavier whose feast day was March 12th. The Baghdad Jesuits preached this Novena at various churches and they were very popular. Sometimes the Jesuits would take turns preaching but the favorite of all was Fr. Richard McCarthy. By the Spring of 1968 Fr. Richard McCarthy had preached his eighth consecutive Novena of Grace at St. Joseph's Chaldean Church. That year the Chaldean Patriarch attended the Novena daily, and on the last day Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Maurice Perrin, Apostolic Delegate in Iraq. But the novenas did not start with Fr. McCarthy as Augustine Shamas reminds us.

Fr. LaBran had a generous heart and we shared together his many plans in a humble spirit motivated by a good cause. In the fifties, our churches were not living stones, just buildings visited by some few old people but then Fr. LaBran was the originator of the Novena to St. Francis Xavier. He started in the Armenian Church of the Sacred Heart in Karrada. He would say at the end of his homily, "come and get two other friends to come with you tomorrow" and his faith in St. Francis did the job. The church got so crowded that two services had to be held each day. The next year it was in a more spacious Church, the Chaldean Mar Yussef. As the years passed the crowds increased like the multiplication of the loaves and later other Jesuits did the preaching. I still hear the voice of the late Fr. McCarthy ringing in my ears, his homilies in Arabic made us think deeply. No one in Baghdad had ever heard of St. Francis Xavier



until Father LaBran started the Novena and then the faith became so alive that people still make the Novena in thanksgiving for favours received. (Augustine Shamas)

### Sodalities

Extra-curricular activities were not limited to sports and debating. There was also a spiritual dimension which was best exemplified by the Sodalities of Our Lady, an institution found wherever Jesuits operated, the Jesuit organization known as the "Sodality" which in some form was active from the earliest days of Baghdad College. Regular meetings were held which focused on the spiritual formation of the Christian student including his social obligation to those around him. The students regularly came up with projects to aid the poor, neglected, and the sick. There were summer sessions not only for catechetical instruction but for remedial class work. In the fifties under Fr. Joseph LaBran with the aid of Alumni Sodalists, these programs took on the air of a summer school which ended with a Novena preparing for the celebration of First Communions on August 15. There were many Fathers who directed the Sodality and contributed to its growth and popularity among the students, but special mention must be made of Frs. LaBran, Shea, Donohue and O'Connor.

The year 1954 was declared worldwide *Marian Year* and 116 countries sent representatives to Rome. Our Baghdad College contingent boasted of 18 Iraqis. We took a bus across the Syrian desert to Beirut and boarded a Turkish boat to Naples. We had to sleep on the deck using our baggage for pillows. Once in Rome, however, the colorful blue sashes of the Sodality became a big hit. The students never forgot their Roman experience. (Fr. LaBran)



*Religious instruction*





*Way of the Cross on the roof of the classroom building*

The Sodality was meant to enliven the spiritual lives of the Christian members as well as instilling in them the principles of the Gospel, especially the lesson of reaching out and serving others. The Sodalities had a large number of service projects, instructing children in their catechism and collecting food and money for the poor. Fr. Mahoney described his succeeding the great Fr. LaBran.

It was not an easy assignment to be the successor to Fr. LaBran. But the first thing I remember about the assignment was the wonderful group of students who offered themselves to this spiritual endeavor. It certainly was not easy to emulate Fr. LaBran with his grand extravagances like the dances he organized and above all: the Petroleum Sunday celebrations. When those affairs occurred, I was in the confessional hearing confessions, since there were not many Fathers who could hear confessions in Arabic. The groups I worked with were very active and their major work was to teach the children of our workmen the fundamentals of the Catechism.

The Sodalists were just like ordinary boys of their age. During the St. Francis Xavier Novena ushers were needed for the daily exercises at the Chaldean Church. When at a meeting I asked who wanted to be ushers (wearing a glamorous blue sash of the Sodality) there was a great rush to the sign-up list and the table was almost toppled. They wanted their relatives and friends to see that they belonged to the elite Christian organization at Baghdad college. Another event which the Sodalists enjoyed was their pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The lads were certainly impressed. We boarded in the Franciscan hostel, *Casa Nova*, and the boys thought they were treated like kings. (Fr. Mahoney)



My three brothers graduated from Baghdad College and so my friendship with the Jesuits was enduring. "I shall always treasure those precious fruitful years working with the Jesuits in Baghdad as a special inspiration that added direction and meaningfulness to my life." Each year a special World Sodality Day was held inviting all Sodalities of the city to Baghdad College grounds for a huge procession and Mass in the open air. The crowds were unbelievable. Fr. LaBran had a fascinating way in drawing people to worship by his generosity of heart and his great enthusiasm in doing the job for the greater glory of God. We all helped and felt so happy and grateful. (Augustine Shamas)

The apostolic effects of the Sodality lasted long after the Jesuits left as is reported in a 1991 letter relating a recent conversation with the Carmelite Fr. Raymond, already mentioned, who worked with the Jesuits in the Sodalities many years ago.

Fr. Raymond spoke eloquently about the Sodality of Baghdad College and Al-Hikma. He said the bonding in faith which occurred in those groups has been a mainstay of the Christians ever since. Even after our schools ceased to function under Jesuits, the Sodality members and the movement itself survived in various parishes (and rites) and continues to provide support, solace and hope for many. Fr. LaBran as well as Fr. Fred Kelly was mentioned by Fr. Raymond as the principal inspiration of this reality. (Letter from Amman)

One of the Sodality activities focused on Petroleum Sunday which was a religious celebration held on the last Sunday of May on the Baghdad College campus. A Marian float was carried in a lengthy procession around the campus and this was followed by a Eucharistic Benediction. The celebrations lasted from 1952 to 1958 and was due to the zeal of an American oil worker, a daily communicant and friend of Fr. LaBran, George Ehrhard from Elizabeth, New Jersey. He wanted to thank God for the gift of oil and to pray for all those who worked in the oil industry. Organized by the members of the Sodality, it was a very colorful pageant and attracted hundreds of people.

### **Religious instruction**

The project of Catechetics adapted to Baghdad caught the interest of several Fathers such as Fr. Marrow who visited centers of instruction each Friday and later Fr. Scopp who saw Catechetics not only for the early religious formation of Baghdad

College students but also for the other schools and parishes. Summer, in the context of the Sodality, was a very practical workshop for several Jesuits working with the alumni.

Helped by Sodalists and other volunteers the Fathers organized and directed catechism courses for many Christian children in the neighborhood. They were prepared for First Communion, which was usually held in the summer.

(Fr. Morgan)

### **The Christian Center**

Summer activity finally motivated some close Iraqi friends to finance a Christian Center where young people could meet for social, intellectual, and religious exchange and development. The Carmelite Fr. Raymond worked closely with Fr. LaBran, whose dream it was to make the Center an important place for Christian encounter attracting not only Baghdad College and Al-Hikma people but also Baghdad University students and alumni. Later Fr. Young was assigned to this work. The participants came initially from Baghdad College and Al-Hikma for regular gatherings and discussions. The Carmelites kept the Center going after the Jesuits were dismissed, and attracted students from Baghdad University who started a program of adult education in Christian Doctrine. The Carmelites had nothing but praise for the members of the Jesuit Alumni Sodality who worked with them to keep the Center active through difficult years. One of the most important people in this was Augustine Shamas who together with Walter Young told the following history of the Center.

Fr. LaBran had great insights into the needs of the church in Baghdad and so he saw the need for a Christian Cultural Youth Center. A major concern of his was a center which would not only be social but educational as well, where young people and their families could gather on holidays and in the evenings. "We want a Center, we need a Center" was his constant enthusiastic refrain. Not a man to give up easily, nor to sit passively on the sidelines, he pushed and persuaded until most obstacles and restrictions were eliminated: obstacles and restrictions emanating from both the government and Church authorities as well. He did his best to realize it, but at the time there were many obstacles, and unfortunately his dream came true only after he left Baghdad.

Eventually though it happened and the corner stone of the "Center" was laid in 1959 in the Karrada section of Baghdad on land owned by the Carmelite Fathers within walking distance of



a hundred homes of Baghdad College students. Many activities and celebrations were held in a part of the city which was already marked by the presence of such popular clubs as the Chaldean Hindia Club, the Assyrian Sports Club, El Meshriq Club and El-Alwiiya Club. The Center's great success testifies to the seriousness of purpose, common sense and genuine Christian faith of the Iraqi students who frequented it.

Approval from both the government and the Church was difficult to obtain. The building site and its lay out had to be agreed on and the composition of the participating groups had to be determined. Since the purpose of the "Center" was to bring together many different groups in order to share their Faith, to grow in a caring manner, and to act with justice and compassion, the building had to be big enough to accommodate large numbers of people. Well-established groups of adults who were to monitor the youth of the Center included the Catholic Ladies Benevolent Association and the Sodality of Our Lady of Banncuse, under the spiritual direction of Fr. Merrick.

Large numbers of Iraqi students began to frequent the Center to participate in its varied activities almost as soon as the doors opened, the immediate success of the Center with its outdoor cinema and gardens, its attractive auditorium and modern, comfortable meeting rooms was a surprise especially to those who had expressed anxiety over the project. Much of the credit was due to the generous efforts of the Jesuit Fathers Kelly, O'Connor and Young, and of the Carmelite Fathers Rene, Robert, and Raymond. The work of the Center's mixed team of advisors testifies to a remarkable spirit of collegiality among priests of diverse religious orders sent to Iraq from separate countries. The advisors worked together in harmony sharing with Iraqi students their collective wisdom and skills. Most advisors conducted their work in Arabic.

Because of the zeal and talents of these men a spirit of cooperation spread into local churches which were divided into different rites such as Chaldean and Syrian, both Catholic, but unable to work closely together. A catechetical school for primary and secondary government school students was established. The program brought religious instruction to scores of Christian youngsters every Friday. Weekly classes (along with movies) were held alternately in Chaldean and Syrian locations. Buses supplied by Baghdad College, the Chaldean Sisters, the Carmelite Fathers and the Sisters of the Presentation picked up students from the four corners of the city and transported them to and from the University sites of the classrooms. Five hundred young girls and boys were

involved, many of whom were from families which had emigrated from the North of Iraq to Baghdad. Iraqi clergy and laymen of both rites served as teachers in this program.

The story of the Center is not only about clergy but also of talented faithful lay people as well. The Center's survival after Jesuit educators and advisors were expelled is the ultimate proof of its success. For the years following, the takeover of Baghdad College, the Center continued to thrive and eventually evolved into an adult school of continuing education where courses in theology and Church history were taught.

The Center's advisors in particular had expert advisors themselves. These experts emerged in the persons of two gifted and patriotic families, Razoog Shammass was a respected international lawyer; his devoted wife, Augustine Shamas, was a devout member of Fr. Merrick's Sodality. Their door was always open, their home became an office for frequent consultation and on many occasions dinner was served in the evenings.

General Ephram Hindo, one of the most respected Christian public figures in Iraq, his wife Laila Hindo, and their large family were always available for advice and support. The good council they offered to anyone who sought it was not only perceptive and beneficial but seasoned with Christian charity.

The Center encompassed the following four groups.

1. The Catholic Ladies' Benevolent Association and the Sodality of Our Lady of Bannouse cared for Iraq's poor.
2. The Legion of Mary, founded by the Dominican Fathers was an enthusiastic group who visited the sick and prisoners and brought their clients both spiritual and material help.
3. The Christian Cultural Club, by far the group with the highest profile in the Center, was composed of students from Al-Hikma and Baghdad University. One of the organization's purposes was to create a good social environment for male and female university students.
4. Fr. Young's Youth Sodality for boys who had failed out of Baghdad College were gathered together in a program in which they could appreciate the care the Jesuits had for them. The group assembled once a week to ask questions, to pray, to prepare slide lectures for catechism, to socialize and to recreate. They formed a football team and once took a summer trip to Northern Iraq during the Kurdish up-rising. The rebel Kurds sent escorts to meet the group when it reached the limits of government-held territory since the Kurds had heard that the boys were somewhat affiliated with Baghdad College. (Augustine Shamas and Fr. Walter Young)

### The Minor Seminary (1963-1969)

The formation of the clergy for the Chaldean, Syrian, and Greek Catholic communities was a concern of Church authorities and the Jesuits were anxious to find ways to cooperate. Minor seminaries were a regular institution in the formation of the clergy and it was thought that joining the seminary with a good secondary education at Baghdad College might be the answer. The Chaldean Patriarch had taken the initiative and asked the Jesuits to train the high school age candidates who would like to later enter the Major seminary at Dora. They lived in the rented house opposite the Boarding school and were prefected by Fr. Regan who made occasional trips to the north of Iraq to visit the families of seminarians.



*A living rosary*

Other Jesuits, Frs. Como and Mulcahy, were later assigned to the task. The Jesuits, however, never had the chance to follow through to a Major seminary, and as Jesuits look back, nothing they could have done would have equaled the work done by the multi-ritual seminary of the Dominicans at Mosul whose graduates are the mainstay of the Church in Baghdad. (Fr. Donohue)



*B.C.'s green grass was due to Fr. Loeffler's ingenious irrigation system*





## Social Activities

The canteen was the center of much of the social activity at Baghdad College because of its location surrounded by the athletic fields. In the sixties it was run by "Adam" who served special meals for the faculty. It was not exactly the Stage Door Canteen, but it was a place the students could get a good samun sandwich and a bottle of *Fanta* or *Kawthar* or something wet. And like all places where high school students gather, it was always on the verge of turning into bedlam. The Jesuit scholastics had to patrol the Canteen just to keep order. Many still have clear memories of the poor scholastic who had duty on Mondays, Sunday evening he would develop a fever. But it was not only at noon, for lunch, that the canteen was a place of encounter. It was also the place Muslim students used to while away the time until the Christians finished their religion classes. Several of the upper classmen were always playing cat and mouse with the poor scholastic assigned to prefect. (Fr. Donohue)

### Parents' Day

In 1965 Baghdad College adopted a new custom called *Parents' Day*. Each semester all students' parents were invited to see the school, parade around the beautiful campus, walk through the laboratories with their proud son, and meet the teachers with a sometimes humbled son. The Jesuits and the "Misteria" were stationed at strategic places to greet the parents, make sure that they found their way along a predetermined route and offered them some modest repast. Students were instructed to show off how smart they were to their attentive parents and disgruntled siblings by taking it upon themselves to demonstrate the laboratory apparatus. The invitations were sent out in Arabic five days before the event and entrusted to the student. During each semester Fr. Sullivan busily collected campus action scenes on film which were shown at the next Parents' Day. These were the same films put onto cassettes and sold at past reunions. The Parents' Days became very popular for the families who seemed to enjoy them as much as a picnic. Oddly enough not much was said about the students' marks, even though the teachers were ready for questions.

An illustration of the pressures put on the students during these Parents' Days follows from a daring and trusting student who took a chance and lived to write about his experience.

In the middle of my third year, our parents were invited to



come to the school and take a look on almost everything at the school facilities. I was afraid to invite my parents, because I was not doing well that year and I was afraid of what would happen to me if my father would ask "How is my son doing at school?" I asked one of my Jesuit friends: "Do you plan to give my parents a status report on how I am doing?" He said "No, this is merely an opportunity to meet them and have fun with them." There was still doubt in my mind whether they would reveal my poor performance - just like St. Thomas when he said "I do not believe that Jesus is risen from the dead till I see him and touch his wounds". When the time came my father asked the question I was expecting: "How is my son doing this year?" The answer was that I was doing well and suddenly the subject was changed to something quite different by my Jesuit friend. I still believe that he saved me from a punishment that I would have gotten from my father.

(Kamal Youkhanna Rayes, B.C. '66)

### **Visiting Wakes and Funerals**

One of the regular practices of the Jesuits as members of Iraqi society was to attend wakes and when possible, funerals. Funerals did not allow much notice but there was plenty of time to attend wakes since they were held often both in the Muslim and in the Christian homes. In a traditional society with strong family ties, wakes and funerals are social occasions. This posed no problem, so many of the Jesuits were of Irish background from New England where wakes and funerals have the same sort of standing - or they did until someone invented the Funeral Parlor. Actually, attending wakes, both Muslim and Christian, was an initiation into society. To see the way people accepted death and the purging that accompanied the rite was instructive.

Since burials in Baghdad took place the same day as the death, funerals were difficult to attend, but Jesuits had a very strong presence among the bereaved. Many would attend the wakes during the first three days, the seventh day, the fortieth and the day following major feasts (be it Easter or Christmas) which was a day of mourning for the family of the deceased.

Celebrities were not ignored: for instance in 1966 the schools were closed for two days on the occasion of the death of the President of Iraq, Abdul Salam Arif. Jesuits attended the funeral service. A wreath from the Jesuit Fathers was placed at the coffin where the body lay in state at the Presidential Palace.

### **Visiting families during the feasts**

On important national feast days Jesuit officials would go to the palace for the "signing of the book", a ceremony at which

government protocol officials would welcome those coming to sign. But most of the Jesuit visiting concerned ordinary people, the rich, the poor and the very poor families of the Baghdad College students. On major feast days (Christmas, Easter, Id al Fitr) the Jesuits had the practice of visiting the families of the students in order to demonstrate their solidarity with the people of Iraq.

Fr. MacDonnell visited a home at the urging of an Armenian student to find that he was away on an errand and that his mother did not understand any English. While having tea, which was offered to guests, Fr. MacDonnell made what small talk he could. "The winter is cold, the river is deep and the brown cows are eating the green grass on the high meadow." After having used up the only three sentences he had learned in his five months in Baghdad, and not hearing much of a response, he thought it was about time to say good-bye. So he left a charming but puzzled host. At mathematics class on the following Monday a conversation went something like this. "Where were you when I came to visit your house?" "On an errand. What language were you speaking to my mother?" "Arabic." "She does not know any Arabic, she only knows Armenian. What were you saying?" "It was nothing you would be interested in. It was grown-up talk." Students were merciless in dealing with their teachers who were trying to learn Arabic, especially if he was a beginner.

During the vacation times some of the Jesuits went to Basra in the South or to Mosul in the North, visiting families of the students. All were extremely hospitable but one of the most welcoming families was the Shemdin family, a prominent Kurdish Muslim family who owned property in Zakho in Northern Iraq, and many of the 13 children (two sets of twins) attended Baghdad College and/or Al-Hikma. The family was accustomed to offering sanctuary to those in need and on more than one occasion protected large groups of beleaguered Christians. Hazim Shemdin, born in 1901, was the name of the father. Yusuf Shemdin, the grandfather of these many Shemdin alumni of Baghdad College and Al-Hikma received an award from Pope Leo XIII for his protection of Christians who took refuge from hostile marauding armies near the Shemdin home. The armies would not dare attack the Shemdin household.

The all time champion visitors were Frs. LaBran and Donohue who visited no less than 36 families in two days. During his visits Fr. Sara was asked by some of his relatives about the motivation of the Jesuits which he kept to himself lest he seem to flatter his colleagues. "Why are these handsome young men here? They could have had anything they wanted so what are they doing in Baghdad?"



Living and teaching for three years (1945-1948) at Baghdad College was a wonderful experience and rare opportunity for an American Jesuit for many reasons. Baghdad was part of one of the great non-Western cultures, a culture profoundly different. Baghdad is a historic ancient - and modern - capital of the Arab and Muslim world, a world distinctly "other" than the United States or Europe in history, languages, religious peoples and cultures. Further, around Baghdad lay a countryside of extraordinary archeological riches. Religiously, Iraqis are overwhelmingly Muslim, Sunni and Shiites, but the Christian minority is a mosaic of different churches, each with colorful histories and customs. The Arab-Israeli conflict, centered on the problem of Palestine, that would explode in May 1948 with the establishment of the State of Israel, an event which profoundly affected everyone living in the Middle East. I and other Baghdad College Jesuits lived for two months in Bethlehem during the Summer of 1947 and, visiting by bus all of Palestine, we grew sensibly aware of the incredible growing tension, and sensitive to the fears of Palestinians regarding their future.

If I had come to Baghdad to work in the U.S. Embassy or some American firm, I would not have had much contact with Iraqis. But as a teacher and boarding school prefect, I had daily living contact with Iraqis of various backgrounds, religions and languages, sons of poor and rich families alike. Teaching students is an extraordinary way to get to really know people. Further, we entered into the lives of the families of Iraqi teachers and students in diverse ways, by visits to Muslim and Christian homes on their feast days, by attendance at wakes, funerals and weddings, by invitations to dinners and celebrations in Iraqi homes where we found a hospitality that was overwhelming. At Baghdad City track and field meets we watched with pride as Baghdad College students performed with great success. We traveled around the country during vacation time and met students' families in Basra, Mosul, and Kirkuk. In Faish Khabur, which in 1994 is the only entrance/exit between Northern Kurdistan and Turkey, we were guests of the Agha, the head man of the area, who sent his sons to Baghdad College.

All these experiences gave us a special, intimate contact with our students and their families and, like a key, opened our minds and hearts to a profound understanding of our vocation as teachers, as well as learners. From what I have been describing, it is clear that I myself learned at least as



much as I taught. For me, the people of Iraq had become part of my heart and spirit. (Fr. Ryan)

A young Jesuit had promised to visit a Christian student's home at Christmas. Although armed with exact directions on how to get there, the Arabic street signs failed him. He came to what he thought was his student's home and received a royal welcome. His student was nowhere to be found so he thought he was out visiting another Christian family. After the vacation the student expressed regret the Jesuit didn't keep his promise. Then he found out that it was the home of a Muslim neighbor that he had visited. They received him like a long-lost brother, although they had no idea why he was visiting them. (Fr. Crowley)



*First "5-year" graduation class: 1937*

## The June Graduations

The 1937 Baghdad College graduating class was the first class to have finished five years and also the smallest in the history of Baghdad College. It consisted of only 7 student-graduates: Tariq Munir Abbass, Louis Boutros, Antoine Tabib, Sayed Hussein, George Rahim, Abboudi Talia, and Edward Thomas Zoma.

Graduation exercises at King Faisal Gardens sometime in the middle of June officially brought the school year to an end. Tickets were always difficult to get since many people wanted to be included among the 2000 guests. Sharing the platform with our 50 to 80 graduates would be an impressive host of dignitaries representing Church and State: the Apostolic Delegate, Bishops and Archbishops of the Oriental Communities, a Member of the King's Council (or later of the Republic), the Cabinet Ministers of Education, Social Affairs and Finance, the Lord Mayor of Baghdad and members of the Diplomatic Corps. Our young graduates certainly did not lack surrounding brilliance to light their exit from the stage. All families of the graduating fifth class looked forward to the spectacle of the graduation held in June at the Royal Gardens, one of the most impressive events of the year.



## Lay Faculty

The Jesuits were very concerned that the lay faculty were a bit removed from many school activities so there was always the danger that they might not feel included in the life of the school. They had their own faculty room where they met each other in between classes. Rarely would they meet the Jesuits and Misteria who were usually mingling with the students in sports events and conversations between classes. Jesuits wondered how the students interpreted this distance between the laity and the Jesuits.



*A gathering of the faculty*

Since many of the teachers had heavy teaching loads in other schools, lunch was the only time they would be free to socialize with the Jesuits and with each other. Plans were in the works to make them members of the school's decision making committees but these were thwarted by the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1969. During the last few years the Jesuits established a custom of inviting them to lunch at the Jesuit house, and this made a wonderful difference and improved greatly the interaction between the two groups. Of course there was always an annual end of the year faculty gathering where Jesuits would socialize with the lay faculty. Fr. Donohue comments on one such party and the courtly Mahmud Yusuf.

It was at these meetings that many Jesuits learned what real politesse meant. Some of us recall Ustadh Mahmud Yusuf, Egyptian professor of Arabic, telling us that all families in Baghdad were beseeching God that a son be born to them so they could send him to Baghdad College. (Fr. Donohue)

Fr. Sara asked a Muslim teacher why he came to the Sulaikh





campus every Friday, his day of rest, to teach Arabic. He answered; "I want to come and look forward to coming. When I come here I am in a different world. It is a green place of friendship and peace."

### **Jesuit exodus to villa**

The vacation exodus from Baghdad occurred a few weeks after graduation when some Jesuit Superior, cast in the role of Moses, led the community out of the desert into the mountains of Lebanon at Ghazir. The vacation spot in the north of Iraq, Inishk which was mentioned earlier, had proved unsuitable so the Lebanese Jesuits invited the Baghdadis to come and spend the summer in their minor seminary which was vacated by the seminarians. They went back to their families for the summer for their own vacation. Some Jesuits stayed behind in Baghdad to staff the offices and carry on with various works of the ministry. They in turn would be replaced in the course of the summer so that all might have some respite from the Baghdad heat.



*Boarding students for the year 1949-50*



## Athletic programs

A large portion of each *Al-Iraqi Yearbook* is dedicated to the athletic events of the previous year and it is surprising to see how many students participate in some sport. Some senior classes were very good in helping the younger students get their games started. But usually from year to year much depended on what games the Jesuits and the lay volunteers preferred since they would organize the events if the senior students did not take the lead. Boxing, for example, flourished when Fr. James Larkin was on the campus; otherwise the gloves were put away for the year. American football was played occasionally but it could not compete with "Iraqi football" (soccer). Waiel Hindo comments on the central place of sports and Hamid recalls how the Jesuits got after students to play sports.

Fr. Quinn wanted to make an athlete out of me but I could not take sports seriously. He would point his finger at me and yell; "Shinoo binoo minoo?" I showed him I could do something and gave the 1963 BC graduation speech at King Faisal Gardens. (Hamid Attisha, B.C. '63)

In sports the Baghdad College teams were so good, that many members of these teams became stars in the Iraqi official teams or the sport clubs in Iraq. In the 1948 Olympics in London two of Baghdad College students represented Iraq. In 1952 more students represented Iraq at the athletics competitions in Egypt. Frs. Quinn and Sheehan were known to be creators of heroes in track and field. In basketball Fathers Egan and Regan - the brothers as we called them - contributed tremendously to the improvement of the basketball game in Iraq. Two sports events that were also very popular with the students were the yearly Baghdad College track meet day and the All-Star baseball team which played against the Father's team on thanksgiving day. (Waiel Hindo, B.C. '60, A.H. '64)

Softball was a game that everyone liked and was played on every available field. Basketball was probably tied with baseball in popularity. More than one of the Jesuits have happy memories of the informal games played on the softball diamond and basketball courts.



*Fr. Quinn in charge of the game*



Looking back at Baghdad College I remember most vividly playing basketball as a young scholastic with a contingent of Kurdish scholars. I remember especially Sirbest and Salah. What wonderful friends they were. The thing I can't remember is who won all those games? However, I remember those kids clearly. There was a small pool by the basketball court where, after the games, we would sit in the cool waters and be refreshed - like the waters of Babylon!  
(Fr. Hicks)

### **Soccer Football**

There is something about football that is universally attractive in every country that can produce a level field. Perhaps it is the fact that everyone is in the game and no one can slack off. Baghdad College students had an agility lacked by their American teachers who envied the way they could use their foot with a ball as if the foot were a hand, causing the ball to do exactly what they wanted it to do. They could put as much spin on the ball as they wished. As a result the Fathers were not very successful in coaching this sport. Nevertheless the students would come back with victories and trophies from the Baghdad inter-school tournaments most of the time.

### **Basketball**

Winning a trophy in the city tournaments was not unusual for Baghdad College, but occasionally the newspapers would describe Baghdad College victories with unusual eloquence. In 1958 the Arabic newspapers complimented Baghdad College in using Fr. MacDonnell's "al man to man" defense as "new". It must have puzzled Arabic readers to see "man" spelled out in Arabic letters. From the 1958 *Al-Iraqi Yearbook* comes the description of a successful basketball season.

The keynote of our victorious season was harmonious teamwork; it was very clear early in the season when we surprised the A'adhamiah Club with a "new" brand of basketball called "al man-to-man" defense (only as old as Dr. Naithsmith - the inventor of basketball in 1891); apparent even when an unpublicized Mansur Club came up to beat us at our own game; and finally no less evident when we snatched the City League trophy from Tajara with a smooth display of screening and passing. Nonetheless, mention must be made of Manuel Jurgis's shrewd defensive tactics; of Muhanned al Durrah's fast breaking prowess, of Sameer Vincent's agile tapping which helped earn for him an average of 19 points per





game, of Ibrahim's pivot work and ball handling; of Wayil Kubba's play-making and 'heads-up' driving; of Sudad al-Jaabaji's defensive rebounding and 'floating' skill. These were the united efforts of our favorite competitors.

(*Al-Iraqi Yearbook*, 1958)

Fr. Mahoney inherited this team the following year and would reach the court for practice and find all players waiting to go to work which made it an easy job for a coach. In an effort to keep them busy and still preserve some strength for himself, he borrowed a clock to speed up their passing in a ten second pattern.



*An informal basketball game*

He had in fact set it for eight seconds and his players became very good ball handlers. Fr. Mahoney describes his season and was pleased and felt that our sports program was recognized and appreciated more than we thought.

It was a long season. The first game was played in October and the final game for 'the cup' was played in May. This was a very exciting game. Down by eleven at the half our lads noticed the TV cameras and they came back against the older and better players. Since it was our third successive cup victory we gained permanent possession of the trophy. A few months after the great game while I was walking along Rashid Street, a young man crossed the street and congratulated me on our victory, saying that he enjoyed the game very much. (Fr. Mahoney)

Two notable events happened during the season. We went to Markaziya Secondary school where the basketball court was the courtyard of the school with classrooms and balconies all around. During the game, the referee called a technical foul on Baghdad College and pointed to the balcony - there were two or three of the Fathers who had come to watch the game - Fr. Thomas Kelly got a little carried away in protesting the referee's call and that's why the "man in the balcony" got a technical. The coach, Fr. MacDonnell objected to the referee: "This is the first time I ever heard of a foul called on the audience." He heard the referee point at him and say; "Two



technical fouls on Baghdad College." We won anyway.

The other event was winning the city championship - Baghdad College played Technical or Commercial school - Falah Akram, who left Baghdad College after third year, was a natural athlete and the best of the opposition - Baghdad College had Sawa Ishu, small but effective shooter; Sameer Vincent, Nazad Uthman, etc. at half time, Baghdad College was behind - in the second half, when Nazad was moved to center from his guard position, the game changed as Nazad could challenge Falah Akram under the boards - Baghdad College won.

(Fr. Pelletier)

At the age of 12 to 15, basketball was one of the most important things in my life back in 1961-1964. I wanted to be on the "second bus" going home, just to enjoy another 45 minutes or so of basketball. Owning a basketball was a real privilege. You never have to leave the court even if your team lost - you would quickly declare "Ani Abu Atoba" [Its my ball] and everyone would understand and accept your special status with respect so you would play again and again.

(Ghassan Jamil Hami, B.C. '66)



*Baghdad College marches in the government track meet*

## **Baseball**

As ordinary growing youngsters, Baghdad College students were interested in playing games. At first baseball was a mystery to them but it did not take long for them to catch on. Once they caught on to the game they relished the playing against other classes and finally for the championship of the whole school. How fast did the youngsters catch on to the game? Very quickly: one year one of the reading assignments was from the life of Helen Keller. During one of the games

when one of the Jesuit umpires made an unpopular call, the cry came from the bench "Helen Keller is the umpire."

Games were played during a double lunch period and a Jesuit had to be present so that the students would not wander in the path of a swinging bat. Fr. Mahoney found he had only one of these periods free so when his class implored him to be at their midday game for the semester he protested that he would miss his lunch. The students solved the problem, after that each day they brought him a sandwich: "come on Father, eat your lunch so we can play ball." (Fr. Mahoney)

In the Fall of 1968 the Baghdad College Jesuits discovered that the good old days were gone when they could field three baseball teams at a time against the student body. Gray hair and expanding paunches took their toll, and so the boys took the faculty of Fathers and Mistrs in the annual November baseball game, to the tune of 9 to 3. Mr. Belcher was their fading batting star, but he was very, very tired the following day. Fr. Loeffler was seen training for the game by cutting down old eucalyptus trees on the property with his hefty axe. His hard training paid off: he was the only Jesuit to cross the plate.

For this Jesuit-student baseball game in November classes ended early. The students rooted for (or against - depending on how the studies were going) their Jesuit teachers pitted against the student all star team. With no bleachers a short person was at a distinct disadvantage since close to 800 students were crowded along the first and third base lines. Fr. MacDonnell noticed a rather enterprising but short student from his own physics class arrive with a beautifully designed periscope, with the letters O-P-E-N arranged vertically along the side. It did the trick. He saw the whole game including all of Fr. MacDonnell's runs, hits and errors. When asked where he got the idea and what the letters meant the enterprising young man produced the golf section of an American sports page showing a crowd of spectators using similar devices. He did not know what the significance of the letters O-P-E-N meant but considered it an integral part of the mechanism and unlike most of those spectators was able to create a wonderful optical instrument to get the job done.

## Track

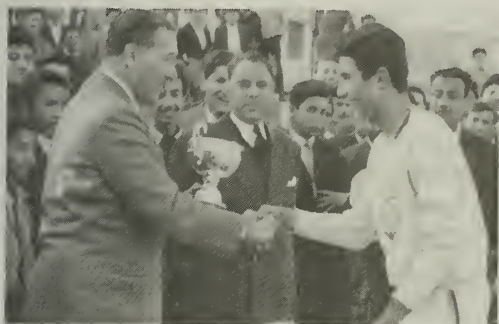
Track events included hurdles, shot-put, high jump, broad jump, hop-step-jump, pole vault, 50 meters, 100 meters, 200 meters, 400 meters, 800 meters, 1500 meters, relay teams, discus, and javelin. Some of the early stars in





these events included: in the pole vault Joseph Jurji '45 and George Azzo '47; in the high jump George Naum '47; high hurdles Claude LeMerle '46 and 200 meters Albert Atchoo '39.

(Peter Atchoo, B.C. '47)



*Fallah Akram receives the BB cup from his father who is Minister of Athletics*

In 1951 two students from Baghdad College, Kamal Tereza and Sarkis Garibian were selected by the Iraqi Olympics Committee to represent the Iraqi basketball team in the 1951 Pan-Arabian Olympics in Cairo, Egypt. I believe that was the first time a Baghdad College student was selected to play on an

all-Iraqi team. Although, in the past, Baghdad College noticeably influenced high school sports, especially basketball. Our basketball teams and individual players had tremendous influence on the style and caliber of the basketball played in the major high schools, but they were never selected for the national teams. (Sarkis Garibian, B.C. '52)

## Handball

It was difficult to get a court for handball, and teachers were aware of the students who had a game on a given day by the alacrity with which they left class after the prayer. The courts were on the far side of the canteen and were always crowded with players as well as spectators, students as well as teachers. The Fathers were fascinated by the skill the students showed with their feet. They were able to place the ball in the corner with little effort. When a Jesuit objected to a student that it should not be called handball because players use their feet also, he got the answer: "Your football should not be called football since you throw it most of the time. In fact it is not even a ball; at least handball is a genuine ball." The Father retreated to think that answer over.

## Tennis

Three tennis courts were lined up side by side with the usual tennis problem of balls going in every direction, and amateurs hitting a ball from another game. It was referred to as a "three ring circus." The solution in the early forties was to erect wire fences, separating the courts. It was an immediate success. As in other sports there were continuous tournaments and award ceremonies. Arguing from year to year statistics it seemed that

the Armenian students excelled in this sport. Since the maximum was two players for a team, mixed languages would not be a problem. Fr. MacDonnell noticed that Armenians tended to speak Armenian to each other when they got excited, for instance in a tight game - a very natural reaction. So when he coached the

basketball team he would either have five Armenians or one on the court at the same time because any other combination would mean that in the heat of battle there was a serious lack of communication - one language too many, Arabic and Armenian. This was not a problem in tennis.



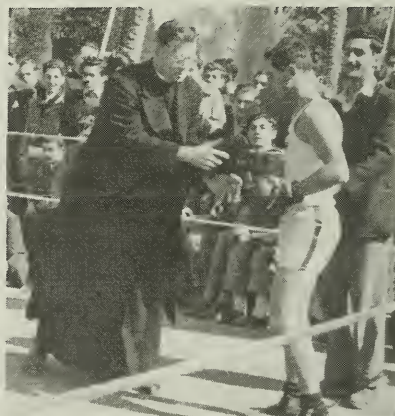
*Tennis enthusiasts had center court*

## **Volleyball**

There were so many different sports played at Baghdad College that it was difficult to find space and time for everything, so the volleyball team entering the inter-city tournaments faced a real challenge. Nonetheless these valiant volleyball teams had nothing to be ashamed of and brought home a fair share of honors.

## **Boxing**

Boxing was introduced to Baghdad College by Fr. James Larkin in the late forties and quickly became one of the most popular pastimes of the school activities. It became a full fledged intramural sport in 1948 since so many students were holding informal bouts at the entrance to the main classroom building, a very central location. Crowds would gather, watch and then decide to try it themselves. Under the careful eye of Fr. Larkin the serious contests prepared the participants for the government tournaments. In fact he had a difficult time choosing a team since so many had become proficient at the "manly art of self defense." It was clear that Fr. Miff did not have a clear idea of the game as Bishop Jolson recalls.



*Fr. Larkin: boxing coach*

At one period boxing was a sport at Baghdad College. Once Fr. Miff was asked to bring the boxing gloves to a picnic. When the moment came for the sport, Fr. Kelly asked Fr. Miff to



bring out the gloves. He did as he was asked: - one set - two gloves - one for each boy. (Bp. Jolson)

## Finances

Baghdad College tuition was very low by American standards, but raising it always created the worry that some talented students might not be able to come. An example of how the tuition was decided might be taken from one of the academic years. During the scholastic year 1952-53 the total income from the 760 students (tuition plus fees) was ID 16,114 and their total expenses came to ID 32,984. The student body was 670 during the year (having started at 683) so after some arithmetic these figures indicated the extent to which the students' education was being subsidized. For 670 students average income for each was ID 24, while the average expense for each was ID 49. It was decided to increase the tuition in gradual increments according to class.

Students fees in ID dinars {not including lab fee, graduation etc.}

	'52-3	'54-55 {fresh}	'54-55 {soph}	'54-55 {3,4,5}
tuition	16	24	28	36
bus	8	8	8	8
activities	2	4	4	4
Total	26	36	40	48

## Planning for the future

Jesuits are notorious planners and the Jesuit planning for the future of the Baghdad Mission was far from haphazard, but quite deliberate and far reaching. The Baghdad Jesuits discussed among themselves their goals and continually re-evaluated the long-term objectives of the mission. An example was the following analysis started in the fifties through the sixties concerning the needs of the country and of the Church. Both are found in the Province Archives on the Baghdad Mission. The earlier (fifties) document is found in the correspondence between the Superiors and the Provincial and was referred to as *Our Primary Apostolate*. The conclusions to this study included the following.

1. We could be asked to do other things in Iraq besides teaching school; e.g. entrusted with a press, with a parish, with the direction of Catholic Action throughout Iraq, etc.
2. The Holy See expects us to be aware of the changing needs of the Church and to take the initiative in meeting these needs.
3. We should not assume works which are outside our own



proper field of activity and it is safe to say that there is no other project of the Jesuit Iraq Mission which rivals this primary aim, that of educating Iraqi youth, and it should not be compromised.

4. Surely the study of the Oriental rites, Catholic or Orthodox, would be in line with the directive of Fr. General.

5. It is necessary for us always to be most circumspect. Our zeal can easily cause offense. Thus, we should always remember that our public Novena of Grace, Petroleum Sunday, the annual "Mission" generally preached in the fall to the general public are extraneous to our primary work. They should neither interfere with school work nor should they interfere with the work of the local secular clergy.

The second item of planning listed here was presented during the Province-wide planning in the late sixties. The study concerned three distinct needs.

1. The needs of Iraqi society
  - a. Education at all levels which will instill an openness of mind.
  - b. Technical education to prepare the technicians so badly needed.
  - c. Teacher training programs which attract intelligent students.
  - d. Cultural enrichment programs for poor children.
  - e. Education to patriotism which should replace other loyalties.
  - f. Education of all citizens to an understanding of social change.
  - g. Cooperation between Christians and Muslims in preservation of religious values and in creating a true social consciousness.
  - h. Sociological and anthropological studies of urban/rural areas.
2. The needs of the Church in Iraq
  - a. A much broader education for the clergy and religious women as well as a system of continued education for the clergy, aiming at the development of an open, critical mind.
  - b. Basic but modern religious instruction for poor Christians.
  - c. A theological orientation for Christian university students.
  - d. An understanding and appreciation of Muslims.
  - e. Education of hierarchy and adult Christian laymen.
  - f. Social services for the urban Christian poor.
  - g. Professional groups of Christians leading to social action.
  - h. Joint projects with Muslims for rendering social services.
3. Working for the underprivileged
  - a. At Baghdad College each year we should admit a small group of students from deprived backgrounds who will receive special help and tutoring to make up for their educational deficiencies.
  - b. We should enlarge the summer tutoring program already established which is conducted by our lay apostles for poor

students who are preparing to re-take the Government Baccalaureate examinations: especially English courses.

c. We should open a special summer school at Baghdad College for the graduates of government schools who are about to enter the Medical, Engineering or Science Colleges. An intensive course in English would prepare them to attend lectures given in English.

Another item started around this time was the Academic Council in the Fall of 1968 to discuss difficulties, programs and policies of the school. Members were Frs. Raymond Powers, Pelletier, Gibbons, Loeffler, MacDonnell, McCarthy, and Regan. Some of the topics covered included: communication among all the faculty, Jesuit and lay, overly long punishments and Mass attendance. In the course of planning for the future the following recommendations were submitted in January 1956 concerning Baghdad College.

a. Need of a committee to study the organization of the five-year English course to effect greater unity in grammar

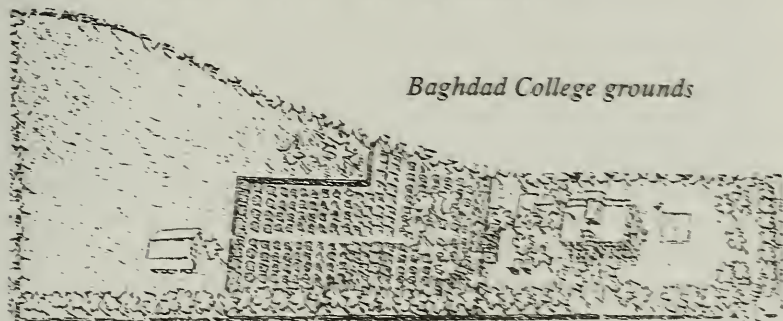
b. Need of explicit arrangements for coordination in teaching of science in English and Arabic.

c. The need to encourage the idea (both with students and faculty) of the value of literary English study, once grammar is grasped, as an excellent mental preparation for all college work.

d. English teachers might be encouraged to visit the public secondary schools to see how the English language is taught by Iraqi teachers to Iraqi students and how drill work is done.

As if this was not enough planning, in 1963 a Jesuit principle of one of the New England Province schools was invited over to inspect Baghdad College and offer whatever suggestions he considered warranted. He had sound advice on the governance of the school as well as ideas on involving local Iraqi faculty, but admitted that most of what he had to say had already been set in motion by Fr. Carty, the rector and his advisors.

*Baghdad College grounds*





## Rome's effort to create new Middle Eastern schools

Fr. James Burke in his history of the New England Province spends several pages describing the many burdens assigned to the Baghdad Jesuits which were really distractions from their work in Iraq. These included possible schools in Basra, Haifa, Transjordan and Teheran. It consumed the energies and the time of some very talented men, such as Fr. Madaras, Fr. Sarjeant and Fr. Anderson. The problem was in part due to the success of Baghdad College. Because of their experience there was great demand for their sage advice as well as actual involvement in other educational projects.

Over the years (1932-1945) the fame of Baghdad College had come so often and so loudly to the attention of Roman officials that the apostolic value of the school was very evident. The mission itself, seemingly unaware of the contretemps concerning school or hostel, always insisted that it was founded to conduct a school in Baghdad. (Burke, 1986, pp. 201-211)

**Basra** In 1940 Baghdad College staff was raided in response to a request of the Sacred Congregation, to have Baghdad Jesuits replace Carmelite Fathers in the supervision of a grammar school in Basra. The school was first supervised by Fr. Leo J. Shea from 1940-1942. Fr. Michael J. McCarthy took over this task when Fr. Shea returned to the college to replace Fr. Madaras as Minister and Procurator. Likewise, Fr. Merrick had gone there in 1942 for apostolic work including armed forces chaplaincy work. Eventually the experiment was canceled.

**Haifa** Earlier in 1937 they were asked to examine the possibility of establishing an equivalent of Baghdad College in Haifa. This plan, if carried out, would call on some veterans from Baghdad or draw on the same reservoir of men who were trying to cope with an increase in Baghdad College commitments. Fr. Madaras had made the survey and recommended against it. His conclusions were accepted by the Roman authorities that had requested the study. So this possible leakage of manpower was avoided.

**Transjordan and Teheran** When Fr. Anderson was dispatched in 1939 to investigate Transjordan, his assignment was viewed as a further diminution of the principle work which Pope Pius XI requested of the Jesuits in 1929 - Baghdad College. In 1949 Fr. Anderson was sent to Teheran to investigate the possibility of starting another school. He knew the Chaldean Archbishop who had formerly worked in Baghdad and he knew the



apostolic delegate from his days in Cairo. In spite of this the decision for the Jesuits to start a school there was negative. It was still negative when Fr. James Burke was sent on the same errand in 1956.

Fr. Vincent M. Burns, S.J. noticed other evidence of this success: men were sent to other Middle East Jesuit schools, not only from Baghdad but directly from the Province.

After the remarkable success of the New England Jesuits teaching in Baghdad other New England Jesuits were sent to Beirut to teach English in the French Jesuit College and University there. They taught all levels in the College through the Baccalaureate and in the University: in the Engineering School, School of Medicine, and School of Oriental Letters. In September of 1953, they moved with the College to the newly opened facilities at Jamhour, but continued to teach as well in downtown Beirut at the University. Their contact and rapport with Baghdad College was extensive and very helpful - for knowledge of the Arab temperament and more, for the relationship between the Christian and Islamic cultures in the Middle East. They spent Christmas and Easter with the Baghdad Community where the spirit of New England Jesuits was imbibed. (Fr. Burns)



*Faces of eager students at assembly anxious to get to class*



## The influence of the Jesuits in these decades

Fifteen priests from the Sulaikh Community traveled around to Baghdad parishes each Sunday. Masses were celebrated in churches, convents and an orphanage. Confessions were heard in all these places. The Jesuits would usually celebrate the Latin rite Mass in Arabic, and in most of the parishes there would be Baghdad College students who would serve the Mass.



*The Sodality marches in the Petroleum Sunday procession*

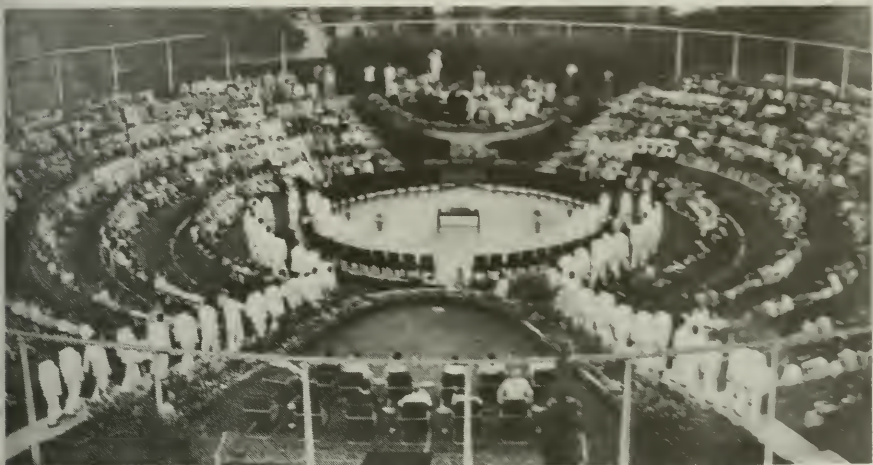
There follows a few quotations as examples of the influence the Jesuits had on Baghdad College graduates. Also Fr. Belcher recalls a renowned Baghdad track coach philosophizing.

Majid Samarrai, the father of two students at Baghdad College, was the Olympic track team coach. One day I was watching them work out and Majid and I were talking. Then, quite beautifully, he said to me, "Father, I remember when the Fathers first came to Baghdad. There was nothing but desert here. Now, look at all the grounds, buildings and students here at Baghdad College. It is as if God put this hand over Baghdad College and protected it from all danger." (Fr. Belcher)

The Jesuits had a profound effect on my life and career. The fact that a group of Jesuit priests would leave their native lands and settle in a totally foreign country for the sake of providing a level of education second to none in the Middle East overwhelms me with admiration.

Their dedication to their mission was a lesson in

perseverance against all odds, and their deep sense of commitment. Their departure marked a turning point in my life and left its indelible mark on my psyche. I always lament the fact that what this superb educational experience afforded to me was forever gone for those who came later. The spiritual and educational vacuum left behind by the departure of the Jesuits was never filled again.



*Graduation day*

I believe that the Jesuits' story in Baghdad should be written, chronicled and documented for all Alumni to read, preserve and pass on to their successors to enjoy and be proud of. The Jesuits' story was a labor of love and kindness and should also be communicated to the American and Iraqi governments. It could bridge the wide gap of distrust and miscommunication which have been prevalent since the Gulf War. (Jack Joseph George, B.C. '67)

When I first started at Baghdad College there was only one student, Scott, in my class who was good in English. Our Jesuit teacher said that "till everyone understands every word I say to you, Scott will translate it to Arabic." This procedure lasted only a month and after that everyone was on his own. This was completely different from the way things were taught in other schools where the students who did not understand would be punished in a severe and embarrassing way.

The other interesting and challenging thing was the way the students were punished when they disobeyed the rules. They would write about 500 sentences or pick up all the leaves or papers from one of the baseball fields. No other schools used this new procedure.

Everything was like a revolution, whether it was in the way





classes were taught, or the way sports were played, or the students' relations with the teachers. The students and teachers were real friends and when I say friends it actually meant what the word is. Speaking of sports, students were not allowed to join a team or play sports if their average was below 60%.

One last thing I want to add which I learned from the Jesuits, it was to understand things which only make sense and are logical. One time in a catechism class, our teacher was asking a simple question so that we could realize how things are put together. He said "Can God make a square circle?" At that time I had a real hard time understanding what that meant, but the more I think about it today, the more I realize that if things do not make sense then they do not mean anything. (Kamal A [Rayes] Youkhanna, B.C. '66)



*Set up for the hurdles on track day*



*The decathlon champion Bob Mathias visits Baghdad College in 1957*



## Chapter 7

# Chronicles of Al-Hikma: 1956 to 1968



*'Teach me to labor and not to ask for reward,  
except to know that I am doing your will.'  
prayer for generosity of St. Ignatius*

### The beginnings of Al-Hikma

Because of their successful efforts in secondary education the Jesuits had long considered an extension to the inviting field of higher education. Their motive was not to compete with very competent and modern existing colleges in Iraq, but rather to encourage their Baghdad College alumni to remain in Iraq.

#### Responding to a need

The attempt to provide higher education by sending the undergraduate abroad was not an adequate substitute for undergraduate education at home. Iraqi parents objected to uprooting an immature person from their Iraq environment, and planting him in the strange environment of an American or other foreign college only to have them uprooted again to return to their native land. Some young people thrived on such an experience, but these changes to and from life in America and elsewhere were altogether too abrupt for the ordinary youth. So the Jesuits at Baghdad College were often importuned, by Muslim and Christian Iraqis to open an institution of higher learning.

Starting Al-Hikma was not immediately approved by all Jesuits in the New England Province because of the province problem caused by over-extension. A Jesuit committee discussed the project and some members of the committee thought that the project was neither desirable nor feasible. The reasons pro and

con were carefully weighed. The majority, however, regarded the foundation of Al-Hikma University as one of the most significant and far-reaching steps ever taken by the New England Province and its existence was seen as tremendously important.

### **Request sent to the Iraqi Government**

It was decided, then to approach the Iraqi Government on this matter, requesting permission to start a university and requesting land for it. With no objections the Ministry of Education, on May 5, 1955, gave permission for the opening of Al-Hikma University with two four-year courses, one in Engineering Physics, and the other in Business Administration. These two courses were chosen because of Iraq's urgent need of engineers and administrators. Using two separate decrees, in 1955 and 1956, the Government of Iraq granted to the University the free gift of 272 donums (about 168 acres) of land in Zafarania, a suburb in the southernmost part of Baghdad. It was about 14 miles by road from Baghdad College, which was in the northernmost part of the city. This gift was a striking testimony to the high esteem in which the Jesuit work at Baghdad College was held.

### **Grants making Al-Hikma possible**

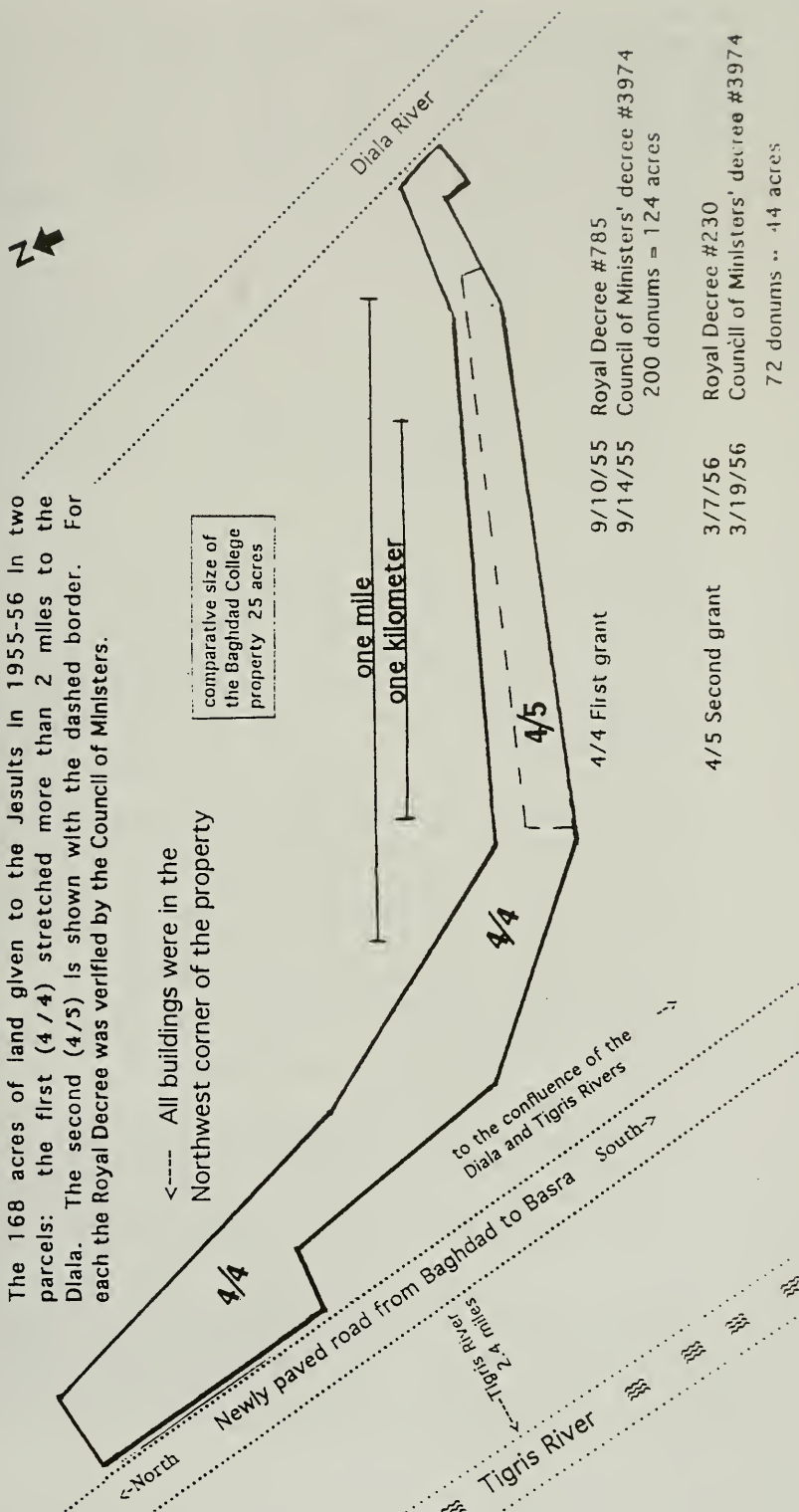
The confidence which the Iraqi Government had in the Baghdad College Jesuits is dramatically shown in a sequence of efforts supporting them in their new venture. Fr. Hussey requested land and without delay a 544 donum piece of government land (one donum is 2,500 square meters) in Zafarania was designated to be divided up. It was on the Diyala River 2.4 miles east of the Tigris, 3 miles north of the confluence of the Tigris and Diyala Rivers and 14 miles south of Baghdad College in Sulaikh. In the first grant the Jesuits were to receive 200 donums (500,000 square meters or 125 acres). Not only that, the Iraq Government let the Jesuits choose which part of this site they preferred. The Jesuits chose a plot so that most of their property would lie close to the main highway and would have a narrow (20 meter wide and 2 miles long) corridor running down to the Diyala River. The property widened out at the river so that they could install a pumping station. On 2/18/56 the title deed was finally drawn up by their lawyer Khalid Isa Taha. This first land grant, Royal Decree #785 was dated 9/10/55. Later another adjoining 72 donum plot (44 acres) was requested and later received according to Royal Decree #230 which was dated 3/19/56. This brought the total area to 272 donums (168 acres). This was a remarkable subsidy for the Jesuits when one considers that the Sulaikh property which they purchased in 1934 consisted of only 25 acres. At the time the land was worth about a half million dollars. Detailed documents (28, 31, 36, 37, 57, 63) for the grants are found in Appendix D.





## Al-Hikma University Campus 1956 - 1968

The 168 acres of land given to the Jesuits in 1955-56 in two parcels: the first (4/4) stretched more than 2 miles to the Diala. The second (4/5) is shown with the dashed border. For each the Royal Decree was verified by the Council of Ministers.



Later when Fr. Hussey asked the government to assist him in acquiring financial aid from United States agencies he received full government cooperation. It was an impressive acknowledgment of the Iraqi's high esteem for the work of the Jesuits in Iraq. The earliest and most crucial gift, these two generous land grants which the Jesuits requested were mentioned in the official government publication: *The Iraqi Gazette*. It was signed by Prince Zaid "Acting in place of the King".

Sept. 19, 1955

Translation of No. 37: - Royal Decree # 785 granting to the Iraq American Educational Association in Baghdad 200 donums of government land as a free gift for the purpose of erecting a building for higher education. This Royal Decree appears in the official government publications, *The Iraqi Gazette* (Jareedet el-Waqa'i el-Iraqia), # 3695, of Sept. 19, 1955. Royal Decree (Erada Malakia) #785 After a study of the first paragraph of the twenty-third article of the ASASI Law (basic constitutions of Iraq laws), and in virtue of the third article which regulates the transference of ownership of government buildings and arasat, and in accordance with the authority conferred on us, we have issued this royal decree on behalf of His Majesty, King Faisal the Second.

Following the recommendation of the Minister of Finance and the approval of the Council of Ministers, we give to the [Jesuit] Iraq American Association in Baghdad ownership without fee of an area of 200 donums from the Treasury's share in the piece of Miri Land Granted In Lezma (number 4, section 2 - Zafarana) for the purpose of erecting buildings for higher studies and for expansion.

The Minister of Finance will execute this decree.

Written in Baghdad on the 22nd day of the month of Muharram, 1375, which corresponds to Sept. 10, 1955.

Acting in place of the King

[Prince] Zaid [brother of King Faisal I who was grandfather of King Faisal II ]

Khalil Kanna

Acting Minister of Finance

Muhammad Ali Mahmud

Acting Prime Minister

After granting the land to the Jesuits the prime minister, Nouri el-Said (es-Sáeed), used his influence to acquire money from foundations for the school by sending letters such as the following to the Ford Foundation. After this (2/3/56) letter was received by the Ford Foundation, their Near East representative, Mr.

Rowland Egger responded favorably and with great speed (2/28/56) to Fr. Hussey. The Iraqi Government and in particular the prime minister could not have been more supportive in helping the Jesuits acquire the money needed to start their new university. Here is the letter of the prime minister Nouri el-Said.

Document #43 Letter of H.E. Nouri el-Said, Prime Minister of Iraq, to the Near East representative of the Ford Foundation, recommending aid for the university project of Baghdad College.

Council of Ministers' Office, Baghdad 2/23/56.

Mr. Bowland Egger, Near East Representative,  
The Ford Foundation, P.O. Box 2379, Beirut, Lebanon.

Dear Sir,

On May 5th, 1955 the Iraq Minister of Education gave Baghdad College permission to begin courses of higher education in business, science, and engineering. On September 10th, 1955 a Royal Irada was signed which granted Baghdad College 500,000 square meters (about 124 acres) of land to be used for educational purposes. Thus the Government of Iraq has shown its interest in the part played by Baghdad College in the education of Iraqi youth.

We understand that Baghdad College has presented the Ford Foundation with a request for financial help. It is a request for 431,100.00 Dollars to enable Baghdad College to build on the above-mentioned property and to hire suitable professors for the education of their Iraqi students.

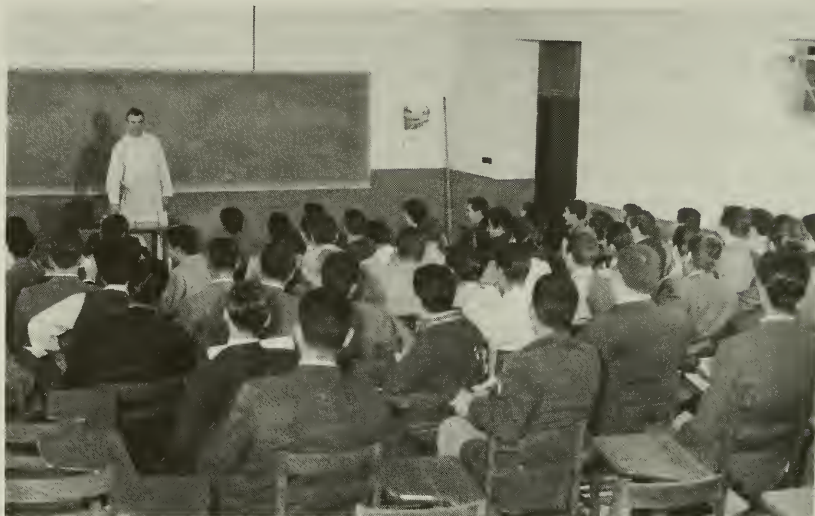
We take this occasion to recommend their request for your consideration. We feel sure that whatever help you give to Baghdad college will be used for the welfare of our nation through the proper education of our youth.

Yours Sincerely  
Nouri el Said



*Fr. J. Larkin inspects a new wall*





*Fr. McDonough's enchanted and crowded calculus class*

As a result of this intervention the Ford Foundation Overseas Division gave \$400,000 for four buildings: the Business Administration Building, the Faculty Residence, the Cafeteria and the Library. Also for the erection of these buildings on the new Zafarania campus Al-Hikma University received generous assistance from other sources. The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation of Lisbon provided \$140,000 for the Engineering Building. Complementing the Ford Foundation grant was a grant of \$200,000 from the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church through the Catholic Near East Welfare Association. Another important grant included \$110,000 from the U.S. Department of State in conjunction with the Point-Four Program, for the purchase of equipment.

The Jesuits sent letters asking for financial help from other Jesuit schools. Here is a letter (2/10/56) from Fr. Hussey asking for help from a sister Jesuit college, Fairfield University in Fairfield, Connecticut (where some outstanding Jesuit Baghdadis later went to teach after their dismissal from Iraq).

Our first steps met with remarkable cooperation. The Government of Iraq did not balk at granting us permission for such an institution. Point-4 helped us out with a donation of \$110,000 for educational equipment. Then the Iraq Government let us choose a site of 124 acres which they gave us for the asking.

There will be obstacles and among these is the fact that Iraqi youth go to Government colleges free of charge. We



shall have to charge something like \$450.00 a year for tuition. To attract students, especially the worthy poor, to an institution that has yet to prove itself will be difficult in the face of the Government competition.

It should be obvious to your practiced eye that this is a request from Fairfield for \$450 each year for the next four years to finance one free tuition scholarship.

Our venture is not without grave and timely importance. It is this which made the Apostolic Delegate in Jerusalem say that he thought it would be far wiser to spend on Baghdad College the money now being collected for the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth.

(Fr. Hussey to the president of Fairfield University)

## Objectives of Al-Hikma

The goals and objectives were clearly stated in the first brochures and early literature about Al-Hikma. No one ever accused Fr. Hussey and Fr. Anderson who wrote many of the proposals of being vague.

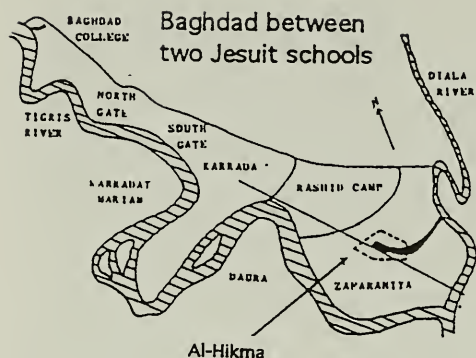
### The name *Al-Hikma*

The naming of Al-Hikma was not done precipitously as is seen from Fr. Hussey's letter to the N.E. Provincial, Fr. FitzGerald.

I put aside any purely religious names on the recommendation of our sympathetic Muslim friends. This included the rejection of Jesuit University. I do not think that the Government would allow us the name Iraq University when their own is to be called Baghdad University, it would look as though we were above them. I did hesitate over the name Babylon University but there is that difficulty that Babylon has not a savory reputation in history and, especially in the Exercises of St. Ignatius. If it appeals to you over in the U.S., I would be very willing to reconsider it. We searched around for other names, traditional names of Baghdad like "Zawra" or "Dar al-Sa-laam" (now the name of an Adventist hospital here) but each had its own difficulties.

"Al-Hikma" can serve as the basis of our putting the university under the patronage of the Spirit of Wisdom or of Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom. It had these religious associations for us and yet for the Muslim it is still appropriate for a center of learning.

(Fr. Hussey to Fr. FitzGerald, 4/7/56)



This letter refers to a ninth century (830) Caliph Ma'mun of Baghdad, who sponsored the establishment of an institution known as Bait Al-Hikma (The House of Wisdom). It was there that Muslim and Christian scholars worked together in translating into Arabic many of the classic works of Greek philosophy, medicine, science, and mathematics.

Their translations (done in Baghdad) of Greek literature, philosophy, medicine and physics were passed on to Alexandria then to Andalusia (Spain) and finally reached Europe. So their work had a considerable influence on medieval European thinkers and writers and thus was a factor in the formation and transmission of Western culture and civilization. All this is relevant to the role of Al-Hikma in both its immediate and broader contexts. "Al-Hikma" also recalls to many as "The Seat of Wisdom," so long and so intensely venerated by the ancient and still vibrant Oriental Churches. Most of all it reminds us of Incarnate Wisdom. This is why the University motto was: "All wisdom is from God." The ideal of wisdom is the ideal of a true university. This ideal was expressed by the medieval Arabic philosopher Al-Kindi in his famous definition of wisdom as: "Knowledge of the truth and action in accord with the exigencies of the truth."

### **The goals of Al-Hikma**

The objectives of the new university were stated in the Al-Hikma catalogs. An example is the following selection from the 1960 catalog.

Al-Hikma University aims to promote the intellectual, moral and professional development of its students. The curricula contain a balanced program of liberal studies and professional courses which together contribute to the mature development of the students' advancement into scholarly or professional studies and work.

In both the liberal and professional studies, a special effort is made to follow the fundamental principle of the Jesuit plan of studies. "The student should be induced to work at his studies and develop himself by self activity



rather than by passive listening; apart from the mere acquisition of information, the natural powers and talents of the students receive training and development."

The professional studies are designed to provide the student with a solid undergraduate foundation in business or in physics and the engineering sciences. The integrated program of liberal studies aims at developing habits of clear, logical and accurate thinking through such courses as logic, mathematics and the natural sciences; the mastery of clear and forceful self-expression through such courses as composition, language and public speaking; a knowledge of human nature through courses in literature; a knowledge of the present, the past, a contemporary social consciousness, and an attitude of social and civic responsibility through courses in history and social sciences; a clear knowledge and appreciation of ultimate values through courses in philosophy and, for Christian students, in theology.

Al-Hikma University strives to supplement the formal curriculum with extracurricular activities. It aims to educate a true and finished man of character not only through its courses but through the campus atmosphere, through an interest in music, in reading and speaking, and in other cultural activities, and by a program of intramural sports.

The training at Al-Hikma is individual and academic, but it is also social and civic. It seeks to develop the talents of the student so that he will be prepared to employ these in the service of his country, the Iraqi Republic. The historic Revolution of July 14, 1958 has stressed the obligation which all men have to contribute to the uplifting of their fellow citizens. Al-Hikma University



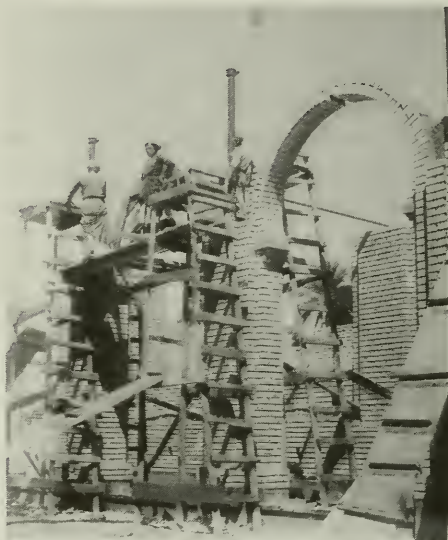
aims to promote in each student along with formation in studies, a spirit of responsibility, obedience to properly constituted authority, a sense of social justice, initiative and cooperation. (Al-Hikma Catalog, 1960, p. 10)

### **Ideals Embodied in the Seal of Al-Hikma**

The seal of Al-Hikma University consists of a very simplified arabesque on a round shield bearing the name, and

the date of founding, of the University. Within the arabesque are the flame-crested "IHS", which is the seal of the Jesuit Fathers, and the jar overflowing in two streams, a symbol of widespread popularity in ancient Mesopotamian civilizations, recalling the rivers that flowed out of Paradise in the ancient narrative of creation (see Genesis 2:10). Superimposed on the arabesque are three inscriptions. The central one is the name of the University in modified Kufic script. The other two are the Arabic and English versions of a theme prominent in

the ancient sapiential books, *All Wisdom Is From God*. Thus, the seal well sums up Al-Hikma: a University conducted by the Fathers of the Society of Jesus in the Land of the Two Rivers where, from the dawn of civilization, the scholar's ideal was pursuit of Wisdom whose source is God. (Al-Hikma Handbook, 1967, p. 2)



*Fr. Guay's beautiful arches*



*A 1954 gathering of sisters at Al-Hikma*



## Personnel at Al-Hikma

The student enrollment steadily increased to almost 700 students in 1968 when about one-fifth of the students were women. The graduates were getting jobs at a time when jobs were scarce. The number of good applicants to Al-Hikma was steadily increasing in spite of the fact that Al-Hikma had to charge tuition while the University of Baghdad charged nothing. Fr. Joseph Ryan, S.J., the Dean (1956-1966), gathered together an impressive faculty from different parts of the globe. Among the Arab faculty were Al-Hikma graduates of the earlier years, who had received their doctorates in America. Also two of the professors were involved in UNESCO's revision of secondary mathematics education for all the Arab states.

### The Al-Hikma faculty

It was not until 1956 that the Jesuits actually began classes, with a total enrollment of 45 in the two courses. From 1956 to 1959 the classes were held in the Cronin Building of Baghdad College, and the small Al-Hikma Jesuit staff lived with the Baghdad College community.

The regular faculty was composed of Jesuits and Iraqi professors, while each year a certain number of visiting professors, on special grants from abroad, supplemented the regular staff. So, for example, at the opening of the academic year 1964-65, the active teaching faculty consisted of 48 members. Of this number, 12 were American Jesuit Fathers, 8 were visiting professors from America, 24 were Iraqi professors, and the other 4 came, respectively, from Iran, India, Holland, and the Philippines.

Many were the talented teachers at Al-Hikma during its 12 years and through the efforts of Jesuit friends in the U.S. Congress like Thomas (Tip) O'Neil, Fulbright Grants were made available. An illustration of the variety of backgrounds can be seen from the following list of American Professors at Al-Hikma University during the years 1956-1967, arranged according to their years of service, their name, their home university and their field.

The following priests and religious have taught at Al-Hikma:

Sister Blanche Marie, St. Elizabeth's College, Convent, N.J.

Sister Mary Liguori, Mundelein College, Chicago.

Sister Edward Cecelia, St. Rose College, Albany.

Sister Mary Columbai Monroe, Michigan.

Rev. Andrew Maloney, C.S.B., St. Mark's Col., Vancouver, B.C.

Rev. Charles Rust, S.J., Loyola University, Chicago.

Bro. Alfred Welch, F.S.C., Manhattan College, N.Y.

Bro. Germain Faddoul, C.S.C., St. Edward's U., Austin, Texas.



American Professors at Al-Hikma University during the years 1956-1967, arranged according to their years of service, their name, their home university and their field.

Four were funded by foundation grants:

year	name	home college	field
58-9	Dr. Walter Zukowski	Colby	Business Admin.
59-0	Pf. John Fitzpatrick	Catholic U	English
	Pf. Louis Volse	San Diego State	Engineering
61-2	Dr. Naser Bodiya	U. of Detroit	Economics

Twenty-seven were in the Fulbright-Hays Program:

56-7	Pf. Charles McKinley	Hiram, Ohio	English
57-8	Pf. Richard Stewart	U. Colorado	Thermodynamics
58-9	Dr. Francis Worrell	Beloit, Wisc.	Physics
	Dr. David MacAlpine	Oklahoma State	Engineering
59-60	Dr. Alvin Pierson	Fresno State	Business Admin.
60-1	Pf. Clarke Loudon	Georgetown (D.C.)	Business Admin.
	Dr. Fred. Wilhelmsen	Santa Clara	Philosophy
61-2	Pf. Clarke Loudon	Georgetown (D.C.)	Business Admin.
	Pf. Roy Bremer	U. of Detroit	Engineering
	Dr. Vin. Vitagliano	Manhattan College	Engineering
62-3	Pf. Kenneth Lenzen	U. of Kansas	Engineering
	Dr. Daniel Lloyd	D.C. Teachers Col.	Mathematics
	Pf. Franklin O. Rose	Colorado State	Engineering
63-4	Pf. Clarke Loudon	Georgetown (D.C.)	Business Admin.
	Bro. Alfred Welch	Manhattan College	Mathematics
63-4	Dr. William Ferrante	Rhode Island State	Engineering
	Mr. Radwan Bekowich	Industry	Structural Design
64-5	Pf. Clarke Loudon	Georgetown (D.C.)	Business Admin.
	Pf. Walter Jennings	Monterey	Mathematics
65-6	Pf. Clarke B. Loudon	Georgetown (D.C.)	Business Admin.
	Pf. William Beck	Chatham (Pitts.)	Mathematics
	Pf. Frank de Falco	Worcester Poly.	Engineering
	Dr. Clement J. Nouri	Oklahoma City U.	Management
66-7	Mr. Frank de Falco	Worcester Poly.	Engineering
	Dr. Lucien Curtis		Economics
	Dr. Samuel Fox		Marketing
	Dr. Lewis Wagner		Economics

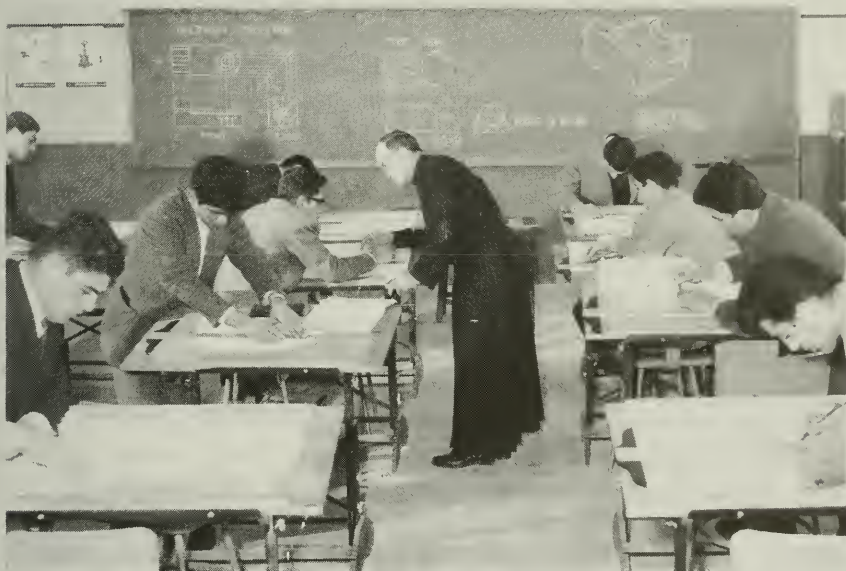


## The Students

The Student Body is remembered by Fr. Ryan with whom students had many an encounter. He planned it that way.

I was very impressed by the experience of Al-Hikma students adapting to an academic system that was new and threatening to them. A small percentage of Al-Hikma students had been to Baghdad College, which they entered very young - after six years of Primary school - and where they adjusted remarkably to the discipline of studies. They did so rather willingly, because, apart from primary school, they knew no other, they were young, and because Baghdad College was for them a truly exciting and enjoyable experience.

But what of the overwhelming majority of the other students who came to Al-Hikma from government schools? They faced many serious difficulties. For example, instruction in English at Al-Hikma was a formidable obstacle for them, especially in freshman year. They came knowing some English but often not very much; and in any case they had never grappled with English as a language of instruction before.



*Fr. F. Kelly's engineering drawing class*

A second difficulty was that these students were five years or more older (than they would have been if they entered Baghdad College). Not only were they older, they were already partially "formed" adults; they had strong convictions already about themselves, about life and about study. They did not naturally relish being put into an academic system far more

disciplined than what they had experienced in the government schools which they had attended, and also far more disciplined than what they would be exposed to if they were at the state University of Baghdad.

In Baghdad University at that time, some courses ran for the whole year, with the only examination coming at the very end of the year. Why study seriously and consistently early in the year? Why not wait until the exam was imminent and then cram? At Al-Hikma all courses were one-semester. More than that - and this was particularly shocking for these freshmen - each course usually had three monthly examinations. Iraqi students had a found anxiety about exams, and with good reason. They all had to take three national exams; at the end of Primary, Intermediate and Secondary school. Unless a student passed each of these, he could not go further. If he did not eventually pass the Secondary exam, he had no possibility whatever of going on to college in Iraq.

Further, the emphasis on memorizing was a serious obstacle. My own experience (teaching chemistry at Baghdad College) was that students would much prefer memorizing many applications of a scientific principle than thoroughly learning the principle itself first and then learning to apply it. Of course, once they were obliged to master the principle first and got used to much application, they were liberated from the tyranny of memorizing.

Thus freshmen entering Al-Hikma, unless they had been to Baghdad College, faced tremendous frustration, humiliation, anger, anxiety and fear. To help them face all these negative emotions, which are deadly to serious study, I conducted the famous and memorable Dean's Hours, once a week throughout first semester. Here together we probed the problems of freshman year. I would point out the differences in the academic discipline at Al-Hikma and explain the reasons. I tried to show how the Al-Hikma program was good for them, even though painful, how it would, if accepted, by them contribute to their growth and development in studies and to their freedom and general happiness.

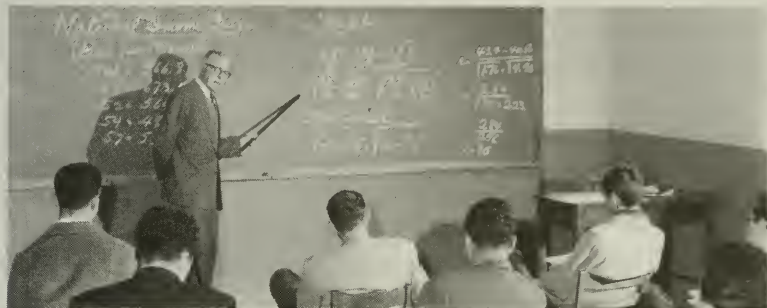
What was their reaction? First, they listened. Then they wrestled with my comments; they objected; we discussed these objections. In all this, I sensed that there was a curiosity on their part to understand the strange new ways of teaching peculiar to Al-Hikma. More than that - and this was crucial - there was a willingness, mixed with fear, to try out my proposals.

And the results? They discovered for themselves much truth





in what I had to say. As time dragged slowly and painfully on, they began to see some good effects of Al-Hikma's academic discipline in their own lives. Students whose marks in the national Secondary exams had not been brilliant - and there were many of these - discovered that Al-Hikma's system was good for them, precisely as slow learners, and brought out the best in them.



*Dr. Louden's business class*

Further, they compared themselves to some of their friends at Baghdad University, a huge institution trying to grapple with enormous problems arising out of increasing student enrollments. One such friend at Baghdad University might, for example, in his accounting course, have no textbook but only a small pile of teacher's notes, and this for the whole year. After all, textbooks in most cases had to be imported and were very expensive. The Al-Hikma student, on the other hand, had a big standard U.S. textbook for one semester which the professor led him through, section by section, often painfully. But the end result was *accomplishment*. The student experienced in himself a new feeling, a transformation, a sense of mastery. This sense made all the academic suffering worth while.

One Al-Hikma engineering graduate who was an excellent student at Al-Hikma, tells of how, when he was applying for graduate studies at MIT, he was asked since Al-Hikma was not widely known, how MIT could judge the academic quality of its program. The student ticked off the engineering textbooks he had used at Al-Hikma, the same as were used at MIT. And he was ready to be examined in them. MIT was satisfied.

This transformation I have been describing, which I saw happen each year, was a wonderful source of happiness and satisfaction for myself. It readily explained to me why so many Al-Hikma alumni, as they moved on to graduate studies and into the professions, where they could compare themselves with graduates of other universities, were so successful. And

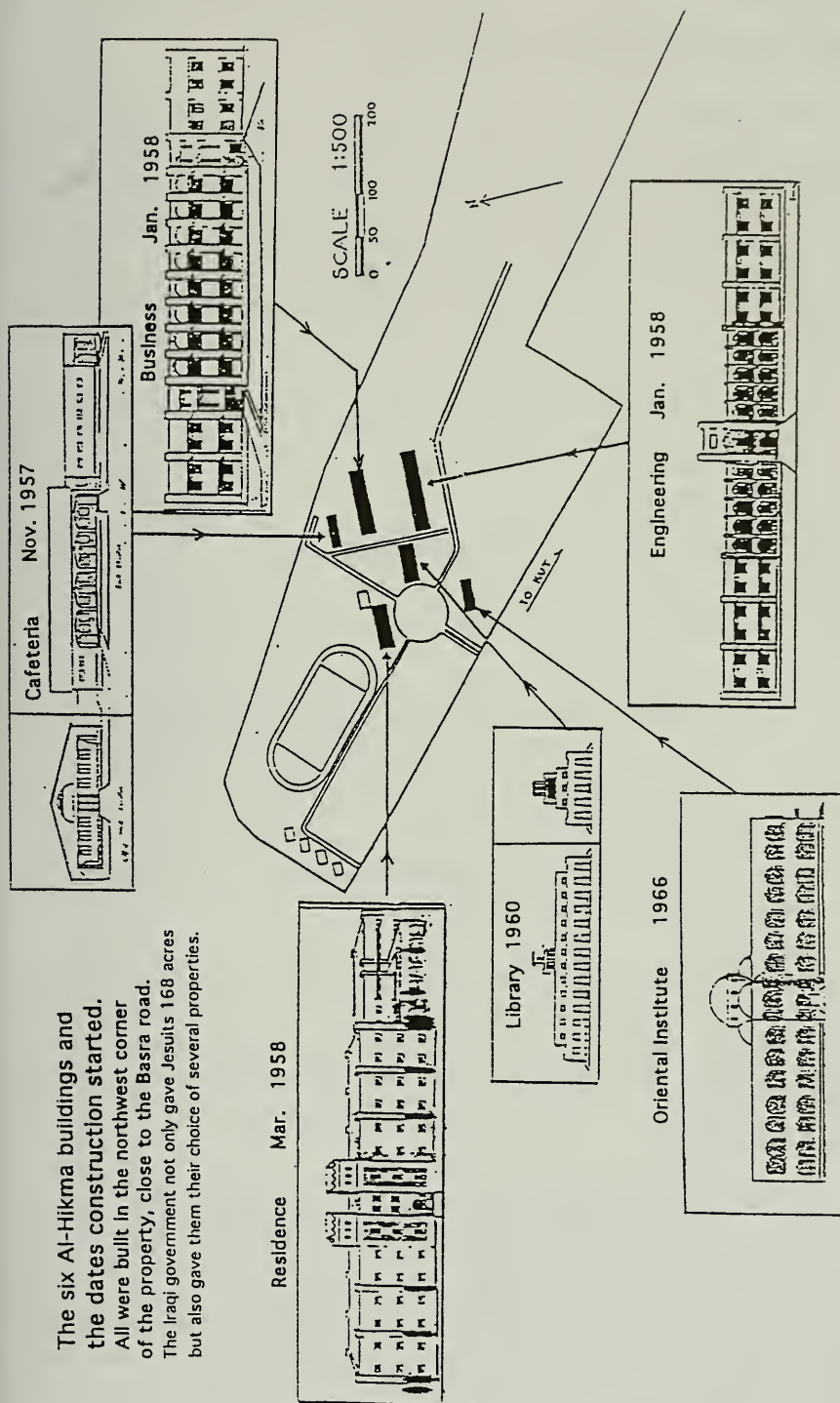
why they look back with deep gratitude and satisfaction and happiness on their Al-Hikma years. (Fr. Ryan)

Some Sisters at Al-Hikma were not teachers but students. One was a remarkable woman, Sister Joseph, who has fond recollections of her years at Al-Hikma. Another was Miss Najla Thomas, a student in the Sophomore Engineering class, who had joined the Sisters of the Presentation in France. Her father graduated from Baghdad College and she was the first vocation from Al-Hikma.

I joined Al-Hikma because some Jesuits had told me that without a university degree, I would not be able to go much further in teaching. I had entered the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of the Presentation at 18 years of age, and my parents were too poor to afford a higher education for me after High School. After taking my vows at our Mother House in Tours, France, I was sent to Baghdad to teach English! There were children of all nationalities, rich and poor alike - some paid tuition, many did not! I replaced a British Sister who disliked my American accent, so she trained me by having me read to her in a "British" accent for an hour every day, for a year.

Many of my former pupils joined me. Fr. Mulvehill held me responsible, in a certain way, for the girls at this Co-ed University since most of them had been my pupils at our Bab-el-Shargy Presentation School. (Sr. Joseph Pelletier A.H. '66)

The student body was composed almost entirely of Iraqis, although there are a few students from such countries as Jordan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, as well as occasional students from Europe and America. Facility in English was important since instruction is almost entirely in English. The University became coeducational in September 1962; in 1964 there were 94 women students enrolled. There were no boarding facilities on the campus but a residence hall for women students had been opened a short distance from the University campus. 40 of the 98 graduates in the first five graduating classes were accepted for graduate studies in their specialties by such universities as the University of Illinois, Oklahoma State University, the University of Kansas, Ohio State University, Boston College, DePaul University, Brown University, Syracuse University, Clark University, and the University of California at Berkeley.



The six Al-Hikma buildings and the dates construction started. All were built in the northwest corner of the property, close to the Basra road. The Iraqi government not only gave Jesuits 168 acres but also gave them their choice of several properties.



## Move from Sulaikh to Zafarania

In November, 1957, ground was broken at Zafarania for the first building. By September, 1959, the Engineering and Business Buildings were completed. In the course of Al-Hikma's first three years at Sulaikh the Jesuit architect, Fr. Leo Guay, was busy with the construction of the buildings which he had designed for the permanent Zafarania campus. In the summer of 1958 the historic July 14th Revolution toppled the Monarchy, and Iraq became a republic. Anxious days followed. The country underwent sudden and violent changes.

But Al-Hikma went serenely on, and Fr. Guay quietly continued his construction work, so that by 1959 the campus moved from Sulaikh to Zafarania. For nearly a year, the pioneering Jesuit Community occupied interim quarters on the second floor of the Business Building, temporarily slept in class rooms, ate their meals in an unfinished laboratory, and depended on solar heating for their hot water. The following year they finally settled down in the spacious residence, Spellman Hall, designed and built by Fr. Guay.

This new campus, with assistance from Fr. Loeffler and his Iraqi gardeners, became one of the most attractive sights in the city. The enrollment, slow in the beginning, made rapid strides, and the facilities were taxed to the limit. As in Baghdad College, the athletic program and the wide and varied offering of activities made for a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere. Al-Hikma alumni who entered business or pursued graduate studies testified to the academic excellence of the University.

### Graduation

At the Zafarania campus the first graduation was held in June 1960. Major General Abdul Karim Qasim, the Prime Minister of the Republic delivered a talk and presented the diplomas. More than 1000 people attended and among those present were the chief officers of the new revolutionary government and members of the Diplomatic Corps.

When Al-Hikma began operating in September, 1956, its total (Freshman) enrollment was 45 and in a short eight years the enrollment had grown to 530. By the time the Jesuits were expelled the enrollment had grown to 656. The student enrollment steadily increased, but the number of Jesuits actively engaged in administration and teaching did not grow as rapidly. The distribution is shown according to the beginning of the scholastic year.

Year	Total	Eng.B.	Admin.	L. Arts	Jesuits
'56-	45	29	16		6
'57-	62	45	17		6
'58-	79	52	27		6
'59-	119	55	64		7
'60-	145	68	77		11
'61-	213	120	93		13
'62-	307	177	130		14
'63-	409	232	181		15
'64-	438	438	150	30	17
'65-	470	251	173	46	16
'66-	530	464	192	74	18
'67-	590	272	211	107	18
'68-	656	not available			19

Apart from some Jewish students Al-Hikma's population was about half Christian and half Muslim. Here follows Al-Hikma University Enrollment Statistics for all four years according to Religion: (data for years '58-, '65- and '66- were not available). It illustrates the growth of the student body over the years distributed according to: {Catholic rite} and [religion].

	Chal	Syr	AC	Gr	Lat	AO	OO	Mus	J	Tot
'56	12	3	0	0	1	1	5	20	3	45
'57	14	6	0	0	1	3	6	29	2	62
'58	not available									79
'59	31	10	1	0	1	9	10	54	3	119
'60	41	13	2	2	2	10	11	63	1	145
'61	60	15	4	1	3	14	15	95	3	213
'62	77	24	4	4	6	29	25	124	14	307
'63	106	32	5	5	8	40	43	148	22	409
'64	104	29	6	3	13	44	54	141	44	438
'65	not available									470
'66										530
'67	105	39	6	8	20	51	67	231	63	590
'68	122	54	7	6	22	59	72	266	48	656

Key: {Catholic rite} and [Religion]: Tot = total number.  
 {Chaldean, Syrian, Armenian Catholic, Greek Catholic, Latin}  
 [Armenian Orthodox, Other Orthodox, Muslims and Jews]

### Co-education

The issue of co-education was given much consideration. An illustration of how serious a step Jesuits considered it is reflected in a 1955 questionnaire circulated among the Jesuits, just a few months before Al-Hikma started. Their answers are not available in the archives, but the fact is that Al-Hikma became co-educational long before other Jesuit schools (9/62).

1. Does Iraq need of Catholic higher education for women?
2. In Iraq is there a lack of this for women?
3. If so, should we accept women students?
4. Would coed be acceptable to local hierarchy?
5. Would the Ministry of Education expect it?
6. Should we provide a course more appealing to women?
7. Can we handle problems of inter-student relations?
8. Start coeducation now or later?
9. Do you favor meeting the problem the first year?

(Al-Hikma Questionnaire on Coeducation,  
12/2/55, Province Archives #510)



*A game of tawli (backgammon)*

Al-Hikma quickly attained a certain academic, moral and social stature which made it a positive influence for good in many ways. It enjoyed a high reputation in both governmental and non-governmental circles, for academic excellence, integrity, and service. If this were not so, Al-Hikma would not have survived the situation which resulted from the June 1967 war between Israel and the Arab states. At that time emotions ran high and a singularly bitter wave of anti-American feeling swept the Arab world and filled the Arab

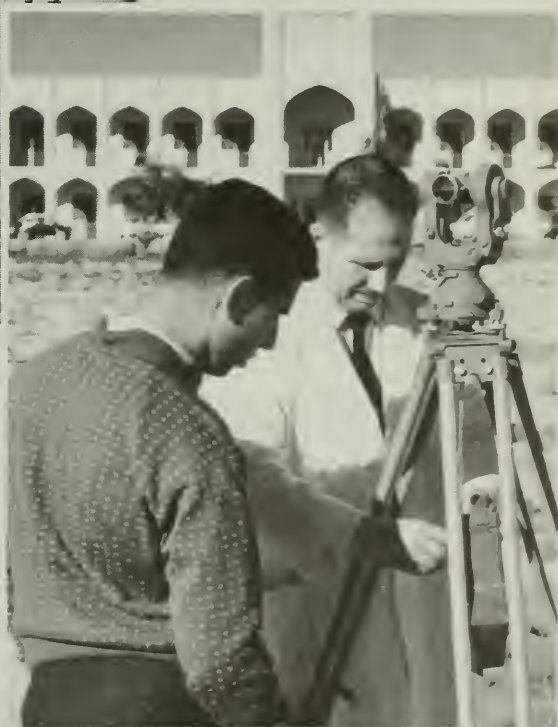




media. Because of American support of Israel, Al-Hikma became the special object of attack by certain "concerned" writers in some of the Baghdad Arabic newspapers, and was accused of being an enemy of the Arabs and a nest of spies and agents of the CIA. The Iraqi Government was called upon to take over Al-Hikma and Baghdad College. Throughout that anxious summer Al-Hikma enjoyed the support and encouragement of many friends among responsible Iraqis in official as well as unofficial quarters. Applicants for registration were as numerous as ever, and in fact Al-Hikma began the 1967 academic year with a substantial enrollment increase with 66 students over the previous year.



*The solar heaters*



*Surveying*

## The curricula of Al-Hikma's three schools

Some of the alumni wrote of their opinion concerning the Al-Hikma curricula and their appreciation for what they learned in the programs of studies.

The only graduation I attended was my own in 1966 at Al-Hikma. All the Jesuits present were at the back of the audience, applauding as each one received his/her diploma. The President of Iraq, on presenting me my diploma, kept shaking my hand for quite a while, and the more the Jesuits and the audience applauded, the more he tightened the hand-shake. It was rather embarrassing. Yet it made me feel wonderful, as a token of appreciation for my being dedicated to God, to the University which had been so generous to me and to the Iraqi people I loved and still love. I was the first religious woman to receive a Degree at Al-Hikma. The following year a Chaldean and then a Dominican sister, each of a different all-Iraqi Congregation - attended Al-Hikma and graduated the last year of the Jesuits' presence in Baghdad. (Sister Joseph Pelletier, A.H. '66)

For two years I have been in charge of the design of the mobile barriers foreseen to defend the city of Venice (Italy) and its hinterland from high tides and storm surges, a multi billion dollar project. Occasionally in meetings or conferences, someone asks "how come an ex-Iraqi is in charge of such an important project?". The conversation usually ends up not by referring to my post-graduate work at Berkeley but by someone saying "mind you he is a Jesuit boy". (Yuil Eprim, B.C. '57, A.H. '61)

### Business Administration

The aim of the business administration curriculum was to combine liberal subjects, basic business and economic studies and specialization in the professional training of prospective business executives. The course list for 1966 is found in Appendix D.

The curriculum was not considered a substitute for actual business experience nor an educational shortcut to lucrative administrative positions. The graduate was not expected to enter immediately into the realm of top management, but was expected to be able, as a well educated person, to move forward in business with greater rapidity and assurance than one of equal personal talents who had not received such training.



Studies in Arabic and English aim at the progressive development of the students' ability to express themselves in clear and accurate language. The progressive refinement of the student's sensibility, intelligence and conscience through contact with great ideas which were revealed in poems, plays, novels, biographies and other literary forms which embody the experience of mankind. A study of the social sciences, particularly economics, history and sociology, should provide the student with intellectual perspective and balance by showing the interplay of the various forces, social, economic, and philosophic, that have helped shape the affairs of man in the past and present. The study of philosophy leads the students into the realm of analysis and speculative thought and provides them with the principles and norms by which they can find order and meaning in the world in which they live. (Al-Hikma General Catalog, 1965, p. 35)



*Fr. Guay's strength of materials lab*

## Engineering

Al-Hikma housed no less than eight science laboratories: a Chemistry laboratory, a soil laboratory, an hydraulic laboratory, a materials laboratory, a drawing laboratory, a surveying laboratory and two physics laboratories.

The curriculum in civil engineering aims at training professionally, students who have the ambition and qualifications for engineering work that requires a thorough grounding in pure science and the engineering sciences, or for advanced studies in civil engineering. The curriculum in civil engineering is in line with the latest thought in engineering education, which emphasize the basic sciences of physics, mathematics, and chemistry, as well as the fundamental



engineering sciences. With the advancement of technology, even new instruments and machines are constantly being replaced by newer and better ones.

(Al-Hikma General Catalog, 1965, p. 38)

### Liberal Arts

Studies in Arabic and English aim at the progressive development of the students' ability to express themselves in clear and accurate language as well as the progressive refinement of the student's sensibility, intelligence and conscience through contact with the great ideas which are revealed in poems, plays, novels, biographies and other literary forms which embody the experience of mankind. A study of the social sciences, particularly economics, history and sociology, provides the student with intellectual perspective and balance by showing the interplay of the various forces, social, economic, and philosophic, that have helped shape the affairs of men in the past and present. The study of philosophy leads the students into the realm of speculative thought and provides them with the principles and norms by which they can find meaning in the world in which they live. From the study of theology, students receive a knowledge of the solution provided by God's revelation to the problems of human existence.

(Al-Hikma General Catalog, 1965, p. 42)

### Finances of Al-Hikma

Al-Hikma financial history was much simpler than that of today's universities because there were fewer complicated costs such as computer networks, recreation centers and media equipment and also there were fewer sources of revenue. The figures must appear absurdly low to a modern school treasurer, but in the fifties it was possible to buy much more with a dinar

(or even with a dollar) especially in Iraq. The annual living expenses for 7 Jesuits computed to 2,977 ID is an example of meager sustenance. One can get an idea of the first four years (1956-1960) from the following table. The figures are in Iraqi Dinars with an exchange rate of 1 ID = \$2.80.



*Cafeteria*



	'56 - 57	'57 - 58	58-59	'59 - 60
<b>Income</b>				
Fees	5,097	7,867	8,820	13,089
Gifts	400	817	769	1,677
Bookstore	887	616	1,419	1,995
Grants	1,600		3,683	9,200
<b>Expenses</b>				
Library	2,102	1,126	1,197	2,426
Equipment	2,473	336	712	978
Salaries	1,757	4,832	7,078	14,978
Jesuit living	1,618	1,451	2,215	2,977
Operational	1,499	1,058	2,153	2,517
± surplus		-1,465	-969	+366
Balance	-1,465	-969	+366	+2,449

## Programs at Al-Hikma

At University convocations honor certificates were awarded to the highest ranking students of the previous semester and also for progress in scholarship, leadership, and for general contribution to the University. Student life in the University included academic, social and religious activities which develop and supplement the formal studies. Initiative and cooperation on the part of the students under faculty direction not only contributed generally to the student welfare, but developed in participants that rounded training which would be of great advantage in later life.

### Scholarly programs

Many intellectual movements were stirring at Al-Hikma as at most universities and frequently they go unnoticed: for instance the fact that in the Summer of 1967 Fr. Campbell was appointed to the Pro-Nuncio's Committee for the Study of Islam. Also the programs for faculty development were taking shape and plans were being made for promising young Baghdad College graduates to get higher degrees so that they could take their place teaching at Al-Hikma. Scientific research was constantly increasing, although some of it may appear slightly overstated.

I think Baghdad College and Al-Hikma were among the first Institutions in the world to conduct scientific experiments on the use of solar energy. Both Baghdad College and Al-Hikma had free hot water all the time. (Waiel Hindo)

From the beginning Al-Hikma was careful to build up its library.

The Al-Hikma University Library, begun in 1956, at

present contains approximately 35,000 volumes housed in the spacious new library building that can accommodate more than 200,000 volumes. The Library has subscriptions to more than 150 periodicals. It contains a selection of reference works and a good concentration of books in business and science. The University has access by inter-library loan to the 30,000 books of the Jesuit Library of Baghdad College.

One of the features of the Al-Hikma Library is the famous Yaqub Sarkis Collection, comprising more than 4,500 valuable books and manuscripts on the history, geography, and monuments of the area now known as Iraq. The period covered by the collection extends from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. This collection, which has long been known as one of the best private collections in Iraq, was given to the University by the family of the late Yaqub N. Serkis, who devoted more than half a century to building it up. (Al-Hikma General Catalog, 1965)

The Philosophy Discussion Group aimed to provide the students with an opportunity to express their opinions on philosophical questions of special interest. At each of the weekly meetings, one member of the group read a short paper on a chosen subject, setting forth issues to be discussed and proposing his tentative answer. This was followed by a free informal discussion in which other members expressed their opinions on the subject under discussion.



*Fr. O'Connor's Regis discussion group*

The Science Club gave students opportunities to develop special projects and hear lectures on topics of interest, while the Mathematics Club provided an opportunity for those students who had a special interest in mathematics to delve deeper into some of the fascinating problems of pure and applied mathematics.





The Dramatic Society offered opportunities to those who were interested in the appreciation and study of dramatic pieces. As opportunity and the available facilities allow, dramatic works were presented by the students on a modest scale. The Debating Societies were dedicated to giving the student opportunity to develop facility in oral expression. Topics of student interest were discussed and debated by these student academies.

The Music Appreciation group was made up of the students interested in studying and hearing classical music. The group usually met once a week to hear a selected program of works, and also encouraged attendance at the concerts that were sometimes held in Baghdad.

In 1961 the student literary magazine *Al- Jami'i* began which gave students an opportunity to try out their writing skills in either language, Arabic or English. The very first issue featured a short story by Iraj Ishaq, Bassam Anastas' article on pre-stressed concrete, drawings and cartoons by Shibib Halabu and an interview with President Banks, S.J. by Thamir al-Gailani and Yuil Sarkis.



*Fr. Campbell answers questions*

### **The Spiritual programs**

Al-Hikma became a favorite place for Jesuits to make their annual eight day retreat. In fact, Fr. Bennett from Baghdad College found the secret of surviving short wars in the Near East with little consternation. He would start his retreat a day before war broke out, then he managed to finish just after a cease-fire was declared, thereby avoiding all the tensions of war, and hiding away at the same time. At Al-Hikma, where he made his retreat close to the airfield, all had been warned to stay off the university roofs.

### **The Sodality**

The Sodality, the leading spiritual organization for Catholics, was composed of those students who sought first the personal sanctification of their own lives and secondly active participation in apostolic work. The activities, carried out under the patronage of Our Lady, were spiritual, intellectual, social and apostolic.

During the summer months, Fr. Kelly's Al-Hikma Sodality took

no vacation from their spiritual activities. For example, one of their projects during the summer of 1965 was the painting of a small Chaldean church in the city. The pastor provided the paint, and the Sodalists finished the job in one week. They also tutored poor Christian students who had the status of "conditioned" in their studies and were preparing for new exams. The Sodalists conducted a weekly collection for the poor families of the city. (N.E. Province News, July/Aug., '67 p. 19)

### **The League of the Sacred Heart**

The League of the Sacred Heart and the Apostleship of Prayer were devotions for Catholic students which aim at fostering devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The First Friday of the month was set aside for special services. The Catholic Woman's Club, open to all Catholic women students of Al-Hikma, sought to further the personal sanctification of its members and to develop in them an apostolic spirit, through various activities that are of a spiritual, intellectual and social import.

### **The Social programs**

The cafeteria was central for many of the social gatherings during the semester, but it was not meant only for students and the faculty. During the summer Fr. O'Kane would run a special dinner in the school cafeteria for the 170 workmen and their families. Also the indefatigable Fr. Guay would invite his orphan children, 120 at a time. They played games, attended a movie, received individual gifts, and were given a banquet in the brightly decorated cafeteria. The Sisters and the girls in the Liberal Arts course chaperoned them. Organized student social programs were also in evidence.

The Photography Club members had manifested a serious interest in the art of taking photographs and in the technique of developing pictures. The club also helped to provide a photographic record of the various activities of the University.

### **The Student Union**

Student Union got its impetus during the academic year 1958. Already a Student Council was active at Al-Hikma but this was superseded by the Student Union whose members were elected on 11/22/58 after a 11/4/58 decree of the Council of Ministers establishing the General Student Union of all Iraqi students throughout the country. It called for the formation of Student Unions in individual schools and colleges. Thus the Student Union Committee in Al-Hikma University took part in the work of the Preparatory Committee, the Student Union Convention and the



Student Union Central Committee.

The aim of the Union, according to the decree of the Council of Ministers, was to have the students fulfill their obligations in the service of the Republic, apart from any specific political party, and to be organized for cultural and social activities. The world of the Student Union Committee, as defined by the decision of the Council of Education of the Ministry of Education, was to cooperate with the administration, in accordance with its laws and regulations, in organizing athletic, cultural and social activities. (Al-Hikma General Catalog, 1960)

## The Athletic program

Since many students were accustomed to the Jesuit emphasis on athletic events at Baghdad College it was not difficult to field a team for any of the usual sports events such as football, basketball, softball and volleyball. The latter was more popular than the rest since it was a game that the women could play while preserving their dignity. Though the intensity of gamesmanship was less than at Baghdad College there was still plenty of enthusiasm. Frs. Ibach, Kelley and McDonough were often visible coaching or playing these sports with the students. Fr. McDonough



*A place for every sport*

was in charge of the intramural leagues of all sports. The inter-collegiate league was also laid back and a loss was taken with equanimity, not to mention a tie. "The largest crowd to watch an athletic event at Al-Hikma saw our football team fight to a draw, 0-0, with Mosul University."

(Waiel Hindo, B.C. '60, A.H. '64)

## Visiting dignitaries

We were honored to have Pedro Arrupe, S.J., the 28th Superior General of the Jesuits visit his fellow Jesuits at Baghdad College and Al-Hikma University on December 21-22, 1965. He had the remarkable ability to sleep when he wished, so his 26 hours there were spent very effectively, holding five major meetings and sleeping in whatever vehicle drove him from one location to



another. Although he met all 60 Jesuits in this short space of time, he should have been tired, but scarcely showed it; he walked with a brisk step and greeted people easily and warmly. During the first part of the evening he sat with a group and talked informally. Later, he stood up and spoke to all the Jesuits briefly

but inspiringly on a wide range of subjects that touch Jesuits closely. He spoke about the Church, the Vatican Council II, the Holy Father, and about the work of the Jesuit Society in connection with each of these. He threw light on the difficulties that arose about his intervention in the Council on the subject of atheism. He



*Fr. Arrupe's visit to Al-Hikma*

placed special emphasis on the primary importance of the work of the Society in carrying out the decrees of the Vatican Council. The circumstances of Fr. General's talk, his manner of speaking, the topics themselves - all combined to make the meeting impressive and memorable.

The next morning, Fr. Arrupe addressed all the Al-Hikma Jesuits in the recreation room, speaking chiefly about the first session of the General Congregation. In answer to questions he touched on the study of Arabic and on the factors to be considered in making a possible choice of an oriental rite. After concelebrated Mass all the Jesuits from both houses attended an informal buffet at Baghdad College. The General began by chatting with the small group at his table. But as the meal proceeded the group around his table grew larger and larger as he spoke chiefly about his experiences in Japan, which gave all an insight into his ideas on adaptation and his optimism in the apostolate. He left in the afternoon on an Iraqi Airways Trident, piloted by Joseph



*1960 Al-Hikma graduation with Abdul Karim Kassim*

Yonan, a Baghdad College graduate enroute to Beirut and thence to Cairo and Ethiopia.

A meeting of educators from the Arab countries met in Baghdad, under UNESCO sponsorship. Many of the delegates visited Al-Hikma, including the Presidents of Universities in Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Jordan and Libya.

The Al-Hikma grounds were very attractive thanks to Fr. Loeffler and his assistants and it was frequently visited by Baghdad visitors who had a common interest in higher education. During the Fall of 1962 for example Baghdad celebrated the 1100th anniversary of the death of Al-Kindi, the Arab philosopher. Naturally Fr. McCarthy was involved, appointed by the Ministry of Guidance to the Committee of Publications. With frequent appearances on TV he attended the dawn-to-dusk activities for the whole week. Many of the visitors from all over the world found their way to the Al-Hikma campus. For instance, the visitors included Fr. Alban de Jerphanion, Rector of St. Joseph University in Beirut, Fr. Felix Pareja, Jesuit Orientalist from Madrid, Dr. Abel of Holland, Mlle. Simone van Riet of the University of Louvain, Mr. Abdul Wahab Dokori of Mali, Dr. Gabrieli of the University of Rome; Mlle. Maria Nallino, editor of *Oriente Moderno* and Dr. Fuad Bustani, President of the University of Lebanon. Fr. Paul Nwyia, of the Vice Province of the Middle East, who has been working with Chaldean monks in the north of Iraq, joined the community for a short time. (N.E. Province News, Oct. '62, p.18)

At other times visitors came for no particular occasion but merely to experience this "oasis of learning". The Belgian Ambassador and Mrs. Marcel Dupret, Mr. Paul Jones of the Philadelphia Bulletin and Fr. John Huesman (California) were among the guests. (N.E. Province News, May/June '67 p. 17)

The President of the Republic of Iraq, Field Marshall Abdul-Salam Muhammad Arif, presided at the Fifth Annual Commencement of Al-Hikma University of Baghdad on June 9, 1964 at the University Campus. Also present were the Prime Minister, Gen. Tahir Yahya; the Minister of Education, Dr. Muhammad Nasir; the Minister of the Interior and Military Governor General, Brig. Rashid Musleh; and the Minister of Municipal and Village Affairs, Major General Mahmud Sheet Khattab. Among others present were the President of Baghdad University, and the Vice President; the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education; Deans of the various colleges of Baghdad University; the Governor of Baghdad. Among the religious leaders



*President Arif at Al-Hikma graduation*

present were: the Apostolic Delegate, the Chaldean Patriarch, the Syrian Catholic Archbishop of Baghdad, the Armenian Catholic Archbishop of Baghdad, the Head of the Greek Catholic Community, the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Baghdad, the Head of the Armenian Orthodox Community, the Religious Head of the Jewish

Community, two Chaldean Bishops, and practically all the clergy of Baghdad, as well as the Sisters of the Chaldean, Dominican, Presentation, Armenian and de Foucauld Congregations. The audience attending the ceremony in the University Gardens totaled about 2,000.

### **The welcoming and inviting oasis**

These chronicles of Al-Hikma which covered the 12 years from 1956 to 1968 briefly described a campus so vibrant that it was referred to an oasis on the outskirts of Baghdad on the edge of the desert. It not only resembled an oasis because of its beautiful gardens and buildings but it was a place of intellectual and spiritual refreshment. It was a place that nurtured scholarship and made learning quite accessible. Most of all it was a place of varied and lively activities; intellectual, spiritual, athletic and social which attracted many visitors as well many students who wished to study, play and grow there. Its popularity was evident from the steadily increasing enrollment and amazingly rapid growth.



*Al-Hikma's last building, The Oriental Institute, nears completion*





## Chapter 8

# Personalities Who Shaped Baghdad College and Al-Hikma



*What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason!  
how infinite in faculty! in action how like an angel!  
in apprehension how like a god!  
Shakespeare: Hamlet. Act II, Sc. 2, Line 317*

## Campus characters

The first four young Jesuits to arrive in Baghdad in 1932 as well as their successors were energetic, intelligent and fun loving and so were the young Iraqis they came to instruct. The most interesting aspect of the two Jesuit schools involved the fascinating characters who taught and learned there. One of the alumni describes some of his teachers who, he claimed, "would send him into orbit".

The small booklet of Aesop's Fables was the introduction for many of us to the Jesuits. We were told to read Aesop's Fables in preparation for the admission interview with Fr. Thomas Kelly of Baghdad College. After this interview I thought this is one tough priest, but then I met Fr. Decker who specialized in making 12-year old boys into men of quality and discipline. During that first year at Baghdad College when my father was

asked by his friends: where I was going to school he would answer; "with the Jesuits". Their inevitable reply would be: They are good at teaching discipline. At the age of 12 I did not know what the word meant and cataloged it as something important that grownups have. That was 40 years ago. Little did I know that one day I would have three children to tell that we had discipline before going to college.

In the later years of my career and my community life, I often pondered the origin of the forces that launched us into success. Every year we had new teachers who provided the booster power to guide us into discipline. Mathematics taught by Fr. MacDonnell, English grammar by Fr. Jolson. A fine of 50 fils from Fr. Fennel for exploding hydrogen in a chemistry test-tube. Cell biology and genetics from Frs. Gerry and Owens. A powerful booster for personal ethics and religion was Fr. LaBran. Middle Eastern history came from Ustadh George Abbosh. Neither Fr. Quinn's encouragement in sports nor Fr. Sullivan's urging me to engage in public speaking were as memorable as the booster rockets of discussions with Fr. Taft about Tolstoy and the Russian psyche and religions. When all failed, there was the dreaded specter of detention after class and taking the public bus home.

And so, we rocketed through five years of controlled trajectory to escape into individual free orbits. We discovered that there was much more to life than we expected and we were prepared with discipline - that "grownup" word again. Our time with the Baghdad Jesuits was a rite of passage. I can hear them whispering "Our Baghdad boys are men of quality". (Allen Svoboda, B.C. '58)

Another earlier graduate states this appreciation more briefly. "What influence some Baghdad Jesuits had on me? In the process of my growth and development as a youth, they emphasized the highest spiritual, scholastic and temporal ideals. Those ideals conceived and applied in yesteryear are today still bearing fruit in my everyday life." (Ed Zoma, B.C. '37) In that spirit this chapter gives more details of some of the faculty, both Jesuit and lay, who taught at the two schools and who were often mentioned by the alumni. The names are arranged in alphabetical order and rely on information sent in by alumni and Jesuits who responded to a request for such information. This latter fact may explain why some "personalities" are missing; its just that no respondents mentioned them.



**Mr. George Abbosh** who earlier in his life had been a Jesuit seminarian in the Middle East vice-province. After leaving the Jesuits he began teaching at Baghdad College the very first year of its existence in 1932 and continued until its last in 1969. He was a pillar of the school, devoted to his students, fellow teachers and to the Fathers with a warmth and dedication that could not fail to impress anyone who met him. He had a politeness and courtesy that were charming, arising out of the depth of his being. If the Fathers had questions about decisions they had to make Mr. George Abbosh was a wise and prudent counselor. (Fr. Ryan)



*Part of the 1936 faculty*

**Fr. Francis Anderson** was born 6/4/00 and worked in Baghdad from 1936-40, and 1947. He was my 4th year English teacher and also a Shakespeare drama scholar and an actor. Because of his influence, today I am active in the local Columbia College drama department and have played character roles in 15 Columbia Actors Repertory productions on the historic Fallon House Theater. (Edward Zoma, B.C. '37)

In those pre-television days the community recreation room after meals was the scene of many a roaring argument between verbal warriors like Fr. Madaras and Fr. Anderson. When one of these warriors, weary of the battle would say: "I rest my case," the other would reply: "It needs a rest!" Since the recreation room was the library, there was a huge Funk and Wagnalls dictionary and an encyclopedia which were handy to settle the arguments. Later Fr. Anderson became the Director of the Jesuit Mission Bureau in Boston. (Fr. Fennell)

**Mr. Bashir Khudhary** taught Arabic through the forties until 1952. He was also the Arabic teacher for the Fathers. I was approached by Mr. Bashir to tutor him in basic mathematics. This I did by visiting him weekly at his home for



several months. During those private visits our roles were reversed; he the student and I the teacher which was embarrassing and confusing for a 14 year old boy. Surprisingly and happily, however, this temporary role reversal had no effect on our respective roles in school. When I look back at this stage in my life, I cannot help but sense the humor and innocence of those events.

(Elwin G. Kennedy, B.C. '42)

**Fr. Robert B. Campbell** was born 5/26/26 and worked in Baghdad from 1951-54, and 1962-69. After ordination he studied at Harvard where he earned a Master's degree in Middle East studies. He returned to Al-Hikma until the expulsion, after which he obtained his Ph.D. in Arabic literature from the University of Michigan.

As a teacher at Al-Hikma, Fr. Campbell was special. Although he knew math and physics, his great interest was in teaching students to think in areas of philosophy and (for Christian students) theology. For many students this was a new and very formative experience. They were used to studying the sciences, engineering or business administration. To be challenged to consider their values and to defend them not emotionally but rationally was something different, something deeper, to understand who you are and why. It was a challenge which many students later looked back on as a new and important stage of their adult growth. (Fr. Ryan)

**Fr. Edward Coffey** was born in 1897 and worked in Baghdad from 1932-35. With characteristic energy and enthusiasm he coached and encouraged the Baghdad College soccer team as it competed with other high schools. Because of my steady participation in this popular game under his guidance and supervision, today at 76 I am a long distance runner averaging 5 or more miles a day 4 days a week and have been coaching a local running club for the past 13 years. (Edward Zoma, B.C. '37)

**Fr. Joseph Connell** was born 8/20/08 in Brockton, MA. and worked in Baghdad during the years 1935-36,44-53, 55-61,64-69. He was the mudeer (principal) from 1943 to 1952, during many of the expanding years. He was very well known among the alumni and in fact organized the first Al-Hikma reunion of graduates which took place in Baghdad in November of 1964. He came to Baghdad in 1936 and was the first Jesuit scholastic to arrive. An inveterate missionary,

he went to Jamaica after his expulsion from Baghdad and there became the principal of the evening school for adult education. (Fr. MacDonnell)

**Francis X. Cronin** was born 6/29/12 and worked in Baghdad from 1940-43, & 1949-53. He arrived in Baghdad in September 1939, just as World War II started in Europe. He taught chemistry and also was assigned to study Arabic which did with such skill that after his ordination he could deliver short sermons in Arabic in a competent and confident manner. During his time at Baghdad College he won a host of friends and was greatly admired for his charity, humility and devotion to work.

All went well with him until the winter of 1953, when he developed a deep rash and became very ill. After a week, doctors in Baghdad were uncertain of their diagnosis. He was carried west to the British air base at Habbaniyah in the desert, where doctors diagnosed his illness as leukemia. He died a holy death on January 30, 1953 at the air base, and after an extremely long funeral procession on Rashid Street in Baghdad, he was buried behind the church in Sulaikh, the first Jesuit to die on the mission. Many students and alumni attended his funeral and Baghdad lost a great preacher. His favorite story was about an elderly Irishman near his home in Connecticut. When asked if he'd like a drink, the Irishman would always reply: "I seldom drink, but when I do, it's usually about this time of the day!" (Fr. Fennell)



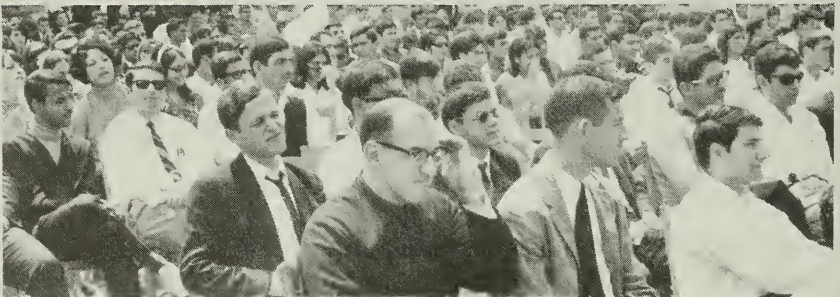
*Fr. Cronin preaching in Arabic at Padre Pierre's church*

**Fr. Augustine Devenny** was born 10/17/08 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1939-49. He volunteered to help out when Fr. Madras needed a verbal sparring partner during evening recreation. After many a long-winded argument by

Fr. Madaras on some point of theology, Fr. Devenny would say quietly "I accept your apology!" In 1939, on his arrival at the College, he was given the difficult assignment of mudir, with no previous experience of life in Baghdad, or its language, but he did the job with admirable aplomb. (Fr. Fennell)

Fr. Devenny took personal interest over half a century in the affairs and well being of our family and readily gave his advice to me when requested. He visited our humble home in 1939 when I was ill. He paid us a special visit in 1942 to persuade my father to discourage me from leaving school after 3rd year. He was distressed when I had to leave school and to start work due to very poor family financial situation. He impressed upon me the lasting value of education. His influence led me to complete higher education attending evening classes leading to a masters' degree in business from Toronto University. (Elwin G. Kennedy, B.C. '42)

**Fr. John J. Donohue** was born 1/12/26 in Worcester, MA. and worked in Baghdad during the years 1953-56, 66-69. He taught homeroom 4B mathematics and English during his first year in Iraq, then he went to the language house to study Arabic. After ordination he received a doctorate in Arabic Studies at Harvard (on the Buyid Dynasty in Iraq), then returned to Baghdad in 1966 to teach at Al-Hikma. He was made superior of the whole mission in 1967 and threw his impressive energies into that demanding job, encouraging the Jesuits to discuss thoroughly every aspect of their Baghdad work and to plan for the future. After the Iraqi government took over Al-Hikma he spent most of his waking hours trying to convince members of the government (at all levels) that expulsion of the Jesuits was neither deserved nor in the best interest of the Iraqi people. The government, however, had other preoccupations, especially that of maintaining itself in power. The Jesuits were expendable.



*Fr. Donahue and friends*





Fr. Donohue's name was on the list of those to be expelled 25 November, 1968 so he protested that he should be allowed to stay since he was the superior of all the Jesuits. Government officials concurred and he was able to stay until the expulsion of the Baghdad College Jesuits was complete in August 1969. (Fr. MacDonnell)



*The B.C. Community in 1956*

**Fr. Joseph Fennell** was born 3/23/11 in Springfield, MA. and worked in Baghdad during the years 1939-43, 50-69. During all this time he taught chemistry and is remembered in connection with his lab experiments. He had a naturally disciplined way of teaching, steady, predictable focused; and this sense of discipline was formative for his students, although some of them initially found it not in accord with their tastes. Reflecting on this quality, one of his students told him: "Father, you are good for us Iraqis." He felt he and his friends needed Fr. Fennell's discipline. Fr. Fennell often recalled this encomium with a warm chuckle.

In studying Arabic, Fr. Fennell applied the same discipline to himself. Knowing that a foreigner could easily provoke an uproar among his students if he used an English word which sounded like an Arabic word with an unsavory implication, Fr. Fennell made up lists of English words to be avoided which he shared with the other Fathers. (Fr. Ryan)

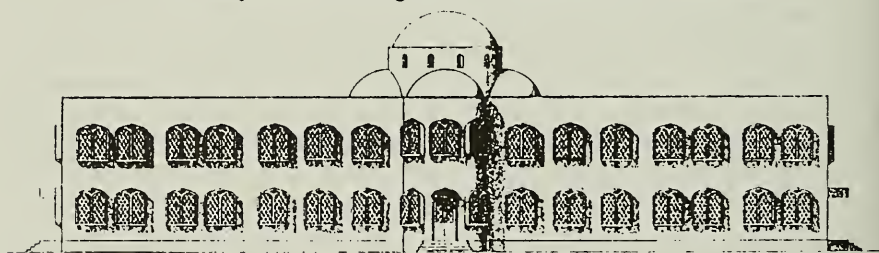
**Fr. Stanislaus Gerry** was born 3/7/12 in Brockton, MA. and worked in Baghdad during the years 1946-57, 58-69. He taught biology (and theology) at Baghdad College and after his dismissal from Baghdad he went to teach in Campion College Jamaica.

What do bookstore, biology and classical music have in common? Fr. Stanislaus T. Gerry at Baghdad College. Fr. Gerry used to scare the daylights out of me as a freshman every time I walked into the bookstore (for a classic example of such a moment - see a picture of Fr. Gerry in the college of

"First Day of School" in the '68 Al-Iraqi). I used to hate classical music. Then one day, Fr. Gerry asked me to get him a blank reel to reel tape, he recorded a beginners selection for me. Ever since, he got me hooked on Beethoven, Bach and the rest. Today, thanks to Fr. Gerry that man with the "gruff" exterior and soft heart classical music is a lifetime passion for me! How's that for good education. May God bless his soul him and all the "Baghdad" Jesuits everlasting happiness.  
(Raad Habib, B.C. '68)

**Fr. Vincent Gookin** was born 3/1/91 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1935-47. He was a practicing dentist when he changed the course of his life and applied for the Jesuits. He disliked being called "Doc", and refused to do any dental work on the rest of the community. He delighted listeners with softly-played, old-time songs on the piano. When teaching chemistry to the juniors, he would astound the class by writing a sentence on the blackboard with his left hand, then switching the chalk to his right hand, and continue writing the sentence! On one occasion, the class had to do a laboratory experiment making a small amount of chlorine gas. Typical of generous Iraqi youth, they used a too generous proportion of ingredients. As the resulting green poison filled the room and seeped out the windows, the whole class rushed out in front of the school, coughing and rubbing their eyes! The experiment was deemed a success. (Fr. Ryan)

\ Fr. Guay's last building: the unfinished Oriental Institute /



**Fr. Leo Guay** was born 3/3/08 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1945-56, 58-68. As the last Jesuit scholastic to teach at Al-Hikma University I always felt blessed to have such fine Jesuit role models because they brought out the scholarly, administrative, missionary and pastoral dimensions of the Jesuit vocation. One such Jesuit was Fr. Leo Guay. I was always struck by this biologically old man who was so full of life and enthusiasm and I wondered about the secret of his success. I think it was because he

genuinely loved children and had a great rapport with them. His regular routine included frequent visits to the orphanages in Baghdad, and on such occasions he would tell his favorite children's stories and jokes. He seemed to have an endless supply of them. Sheep grazed on the campus lawn to be fattened up for the orphans. When sufficiently plump, off they went to the delighted orphans. If any strayed off the campus, neighbors were kind enough to return them for the orphans.

He was also a self taught architect who sent away for books on architecture when he first came to Baghdad College. His skills were quite developed by the time he got to Al-Hikma University and each new building seemed even better than the previous one. His last unfinished building was the Oriental Institute. It had a distinctively Arab and Middle Eastern flavor, and when the beautiful blue dome was finished it had a startlingly beautiful optical illusion. As people drove by on the road to Basra it seemed as if an image of a cross reflecting sunlight off the dome followed them as they sped along the road. He used the principle of the geodesic dome which he learned from Buckminster Fuller to construct workmen's housing.

In addition to a nice sense of humor, he had a very scientific mind and was always learning and teaching. He knew the names of many stars and emphasized that often the Arabs had named them. He was not afraid to make mistakes because we usually learn from our mistakes and most successful people have had their share of failures. (Fr. James Spillane)

**Fr. Thomas Hussey** was born 5/29/09 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1937-40, 44-46, 47-59. 66-69. After Fr. Hussey finished his early teaching years ('37-'40) he went to India to study theology for ordination, since trans-Atlantic travel was too difficult for Americans during the war. When he returned in 1944 he quickly became a very popular teacher of first year students. Then in 1952 he became the superior of the mission until 1958. During these years the expansion of Baghdad College and the extension to Al-Hikma was due in great part to him. He requested land from the Iraqi government and they gave the Jesuits an enormous 168 acres. He requested money from foundations and they also were quite generous. He had asked the prime minister to intercede for the Jesuits with the foundations and he did. Perhaps due to his success in getting needed donations for Baghdad College, he was called to Boston to work in a similar job at the Jesuit Missions office. He returned to Iraq in 1966. Ever since the expulsion he has worked as librarian at the Cathedral Elementary School



in Boston. In 1993 the library was named in his honor when he was honored as a much loved friend and teacher: "... well educated, forever patient and committed to giving the next generation a boost they will not find anywhere else." At the ceremony the children put on a play acting out his life and included a scene of his expulsion from Iraq. (Fr. MacDonnell)

**Fr. Frederick Kelly** was born 12/4/22 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1949-52, 59-68. He taught physics at Baghdad College during his first stint and returned as Dean of Al-Hikma's Engineering school in 1959 and continued at this post until November 1968. Fr. Fred was always doing interesting things, like teaching, preaching, coaching, motivating, counseling, consoling, administering the sacraments and a myriad of other marvelous things.



*Fr. F. Kelly running a physics lab in 1951*

Students called him el-Spanner (spanner wrench) because he could fit into any science course and could teach any mathematics, physics or engineering subject. Whenever a teacher called in sick and the students thought they had a holiday Fr. Fred would show up and take the teacher's place. When asked how he could do this since it required so much habitual knowledge, he confided with his impish grin: "Its just that I can read faster than the students can."

In a similar way he was called el chibar, the lion, because this kind and gentle man tolerated no nonsense. He faced down armed men who came onto the campus to disrupt classes at the beginning of the 1968 Fall semester. A while later when the decree of dismissal arrived, listing 8 Jesuit names to be dismissed from the country, two of the names listed referred to Fr. Kelly: Frederick William Kelly and Kelly Frederick William. Mystified by American organization of names and surnames the authorities were not sure what el chibar's name was but it was clear that they wanted to get this tough



adversary out of their hair.

The most common Arabic nick-name was Amu-Fred - uncle Fred - and this was the title that meant the most to him and to his fellow Jesuits. It was a term of endearment and respect which his Jesuit friends still use. (Fr. MacDonnell)

**Fr. Thomas Kelly** was born 4/18/12 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1945-55, 56-69. Fr. Kelly was a skilled disciplinarian which job he filled at Baghdad College for many years and his favorite saying seemed to be "Let the punishment fit the crime." Of many examples one stands out. A lad was carving his name on a date tree, perhaps thinking who is going to mind since there were over 200 date trees on the campus. Fr. Kelly minded and had him stay after school until he had memorized the poem "Woodsman Spare that Tree".

Occasionally he would have a tough case and call the student's father. One such time he sent a boy home for the harmless prank of approaching another from behind and poking them in

the leg causing them to lose their balance and fall over. All they lost was their dignity. When the father arrived with his son in tow, it was clear that he was not in a mood for jokes and when the poor lad was told to demonstrate on his father what he was doing he pleaded: "He'll kill me." It seemed that Fr. Kelly believed the boy since he dismissed the case on the spot and never called the father again. (Fr. MacDonnell)



*The renowned scheduling board invented in 1956*

**Fr. Joseph LaBran** was born 8/19/15 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1949-58. In his literature courses Fr. LaBran had his students memorize many passages not only to help them appreciate the author at the time but to store away passages that they would savor later in life. He accomplished both. At the biennial reunions, even before saying hello, his former students approach him reciting passages from Shakespeare's plays or Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* which they have treasured for 40 years. Fr. LaBran was very proud of the fact that during his visit to Baghdad College King Faisal lingered longer in his literature class than in any of the other classes. Students recited their assigned memory from *Julius Caesar*: "He would be king, that he might change

his nation". Three months later King Faisal was dead.

One of the summers I visited the Jesuit house in Saadun where Father LaBran was staying and I met some of his Sodalists. It took true dedication for Fr. LaBran to live at the place and under such primitive conditions. Once he was bitten by a wild dog and had to be taken to the hospital for stitches and rabies shots. Fr. LaBran came in to tell me that they had an alcoholic living alone and in a hallucinated state. He got him to the house and had his Sodalists taking turns watching the man. The boys were frightened facing such a situation for the first time, but I encouraged them. After Fr. LaBran had convinced him to receive the sacraments he died peacefully.

My father-in-law who was vice president of the high court of Iraq had a stroke and was in a coma at the hospital. During martial law following a revolution Father LaBran was with us and was a great support. He gave the last blessings and was the only friend who came to our home at this time of our sorrow. At the time there was a very dangerous atmosphere in Baghdad, with the city reserve oil tanks on fire. He got home safely but Fr. LaBran gave the Holy Spirit a difficult time.

When Fr. LaBran had to leave us to go back to the States we had broken hearts and missed him very much. His dedication and service to the people of Iraq can never be forgotten. For us he was the new 20th century St. Paul spreading the word of God. He did great good with his great heart and simple ways open with charity to all. We pray that our future church will be blessed by men like him to spread the love and faith that conquers the world. (Augustine Shamas)

**Fr. James P. Larkin** was born 2/15/10 and worked in Baghdad from 1944-54, 57-69. He was tall, stocky and in fine physical condition. When students at Baghdad College learned that he had been a boxer, they were not surprised since he looked the part. But big as he was, he was a gentle person, very fond of his students. Some of them were courageous enough to take boxing lessons from him. When Fr. James' younger brother William, the physicist, arrived in Baghdad they were naturally named Big Larkin and Small Larkin. Fr. James' interest in photography resulted in some of the best pictures of Baghdad College and Al-Hikma, many of which are shown in these pages due to the kindness of his sister Helen who owns them. When he was taking the photographs he was anxious about every detail so his photos were outstanding. (Fr. Ryan)



**Fr. Charles M. Loeffler** was born 2/19/12 in Mattapan, MA. and worked in Baghdad during the years 1943-50, 51-61, 62-69. He taught French at Holy Cross and, after ordination in 1941, he taught English, math, and theology at Baghdad College until the expulsion of 1969, and then he did pastoral work in the south end of Boston until retirement in 1992. He loved to help keep up the Baghdad College grounds and was known for his cheerful and wry humor. (Fr. MacDonnell)



*Fr. MacDonnell: Al-Hikma physics lab in 1956*

**Fr. Joseph MacDonnell** was born 5/4/29 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1955-58, 64-69. During June after his first year of teaching he gathered together ten of his Christian students and gave them a three-day closed retreat. It was so successful that during the next two years he gave four more of these retreats. Later in the sixties he took charge of the retreat program which grew rapidly so that by 1968 no less than 15 closed retreats were held, one of which accommodated 48 alumni. In Detroit, at the request of the alumni, he revived the retreat movement because of the insistence of the alumni and initiated the very meaningful retreats and days of recollection now held at the Manresa Retreat House in Bloomfield.

Fr. MacDonnell sometimes filled in for teachers who fell ill. His good friend Alfred Nasri was overtaken by an extended two month sickness and Fr. MacDonnell went to the mudir to point out that students needed that instruction for their third year government exam so he would take all seven physics classes whenever he had a free period in his own schedule. For two months he taught each of the seven periods each day and his students did quite well in their government exam. (Fr. Ryan)

**Fr. Sidney MacNeil** was born 9/14/09 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1937-39, 43-56, 57-69. He was one of the pillars of Baghdad College, and much later at Al-Hikma. He seemed to know everyone and all the members of their families. More important, he always was available and happy that people would ask his advice or his help. For those

who, on graduating from Baghdad College, were desirous of going on to further studies abroad, he was particularly encouraging. He had a very positive attitude, noticing the good qualities in students. Jesuits used to joke with him about his enthusiasm for students who were particularly bright and talented, especially if they were hard workers. He had a list of the 10 best students as well as the best - best and even the best - best - best students. (Fr. Ryan)

Father Sidney MacNeil worked hard and long attempting to obtain academic scholarships for the graduates of Baghdad College. He was frequently successful, as in my own case, and several others of my own class of B.C. '48. To his time consuming and knowledgeable handling of my applications to and communications with various American institutions, and to his continuous patient efforts and counseling, I "owe" having the privilege of attending (tuition-free) two of the most prestigious (and expensive) universities (Yale and Princeton). Father MacNeil, also, looked for and found other ways to help B.C. graduates: as in my case. While waiting for the finalization of his efforts to obtain a scholarship for me (which took a full year) he also managed to arrange to provide me with the opportunity to work at a company. (Ramzi Hermiz, B.C. '48)

**Fr. Edward Madaras** was born 1/30/97 in Defiance, Ohio and worked in Baghdad during the years 1932-44, 46-67. Fr. Madaras had been in Baghdad for 35 years doing magnificent work. During which time only once did he return for a few weeks to visit his brothers, Joseph Madaras of Birmingham, Michigan, and Arthur Madaras of Indianapolis, Indiana. He devoted his many and exceptional talents and all his strength to Baghdad College, and is rightly regarded by all as not only the co-founder of the school but also as one of its principal pillars and personalities. For seven years Father was President of the College; and for the other 28 years he labored as administrator, architect, builder and teacher.

For all who knew him Fr. Madaras was surely one who would stand high on any list of "Great Characters I Have Met." It is out of the question in such a brief sketch to do this many-faceted character justice. Two features only can be mentioned. The first was his tireless and amazing industry.

He was a very talented, very exact and very argumentative Jesuit from Defiance, Ohio. During the Community meals Jesuit scholastics took their turns reading to the community while an older Father was assigned to correct their mistakes in



pronunciation. No one ever got away with a mispronunciation when Fr. Madaras was the prefect of reading. He was the type of person who, instead of taking snacks, devoured Webster's dictionary during his spare time.



*Frs. Guay and Madaras*

He brooked no shoddy work either, and once refused to pay a company for 20 chairs he had ordered because they were made of inferior wood from packing cases. He told scholastics: "I am here to train you to do things properly." In later years he was very popular with these scholastics. He taught mathematics classes until the year he died in 1967. He was buried in the cemetery in back of the Baghdad College chapel. (Fr. Fennell)

**Fr. Charles Mahan** was born 3/29/99 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1934-46, 47-57, 58-69. The boarding school near the Tigris River, with mostly Iraqi boarders from Baghdad itself, from Basra in the south and from Mosul in the north, was well-disciplined under the stern command of Fr. Mahan. He also cared for the spiritual well being of his charges and made sure that the Christian boarders went to Mass each morning before breakfast.

He was no one to fool with. One day a young Shaikh named Ahmed of the Shammar tribe in north Iraq confessed: "There are 50,000 Arabs in my tribe afraid of me, and I'm afraid of Fr. Mahan!" Logically, we may assume that made 50,001 Arabs in Iraq afraid of Fr. Mahan (5 ft. 4 in.)! Shaikh Ahmed had 3 younger brothers with him in the boarding school, all crowded together in one room. They brought fearsome-looking handguns and ammunition, which Fr. Mahan locked up in his safe. On Thursday afternoon, on the way to see a movie in Baghdad, they demanded to carry their guns with them. "We have enemies in Baghdad!" Fortunately, they never had to use them: on return from the movie, the guns were locked up for the week. They had a giant body-guard, who was a walking arsenal of weapons! When asked: "Is he your servant?",



Ahmed replied: "No, he is our slave!" (Fr. Fennell)

In the school year 48-49, I was in 2-C with Fr. Mahan. In religion classes Fr. Mahan was fond of telling us not to seek the Cadillac and mansion, that many who become rich tend to acquire, and to be satisfied with the simple pleasures of life. At that time I had no idea what a Cadillac was. But little did I know, that just a few years later, I would be implanted in the city where all the Cadillacs in the world are made. And as fate would have it, I became fast friends with the St. Aubin family, direct descendants of a Lieutenant in the Mission, Captain Siur Antoine DeLaMothe Cadillac. (Saib Shunia, B.C. '52)

**Fr. John Mahoney** was born 1/2/19 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1945-48, 53-69. In 1946 Fr. Madaras informed Fr. John Mahoney, just finishing his first year in Baghdad, that he would be studying the language full time beginning right away. He was surprised since he never was mistaken for a linguist in any of the languages a Jesuit has to study in his career and besides he enjoyed teaching his freshman section. Fr. Superior said "right away" and he meant it, so he boarded the bus to Karrada to the home of the Arabic teacher Mu'allim Bashir.

The high point of his Arabic career came when he preached a few of the ceremonies in place of the eloquent Fr. Richard McCarthy. That accomplishment was his diploma for Arabic studies in Baghdad even though he claimed that he was just beginning to get the hand of the language and the thinking that goes with it. In his later years he spent much of his time with the families of the Baghdad College workers.

He worried about the children of the men who worked at the college - bus drivers, kitchen workers, and workers in the various residences (about 25 families in all). These children attended school at Jesuit expense, to the Chaldean Sisters' Primary in the center of Baghdad to whom the Jesuits paid tuition and bus transportation. He noticed that their grades were very low and when Fr. Mahoney visited their homes, he could see why. They had no place to study so Fr. Mahoney volunteered to gather the students for a two-hour study period from 5 to 7 five days a week in one of the school classrooms. So the children came in big numbers. On Sundays Fr. Mahoney said Mass for all and had the youngsters sing the appropriate hymns. Quite a few of them were good athletes. This was shown when the girls beat the boys in soccer. The girls beat their brothers and this in front of a group of neighboring Iraqis who were completely amazed. (Fr. MacDonnell)



**Fr. Stanley Marrow** was born 2/1/31 in Baghdad, Iraq and worked in Baghdad during the years 1955-58, 66-67. He has been mentioned in Chapter 5 in the discussion of Jesuit vocations and the influence Jesuits had. After his graduation in 1947 he became the first Jesuit vocation. He returned to Baghdad College in 1955 to teach chemistry. He surprised his first class of students who expected another American Jesuit. They found that they had to be more circumspect about their language since he was one of them. He enjoyed being with the students and they with him.

After studying theology (1958-62) and being ordained in the Syrian rite he returned once again to Iraq in 1967, this time as a theology teacher at Al-Hikma. After the expulsion Fr. Marrow went to the Weston School of Theology where he still teaches and does scholarly work in the field of New Testament studies. He has authored a few books and gained a wonderful reputation in the field of sacred scripture.  
(Fr. MacDonnell)

**Fr. Richard McCarthy** was born 3/7/12 in Chicopee, MA. He worked in Baghdad during the years 1938-41, 51-68. Fr. McCarthy became Rector of the University in 1965. He had done graduate studies in Rome and Oxford University in England. An outstanding scholar, he became fluent in Arabic and oriental languages and was an authority on Islamic philosophy and theology. The House of Studies was under his supervision and he was a dedicated teacher of Arabic to his Jesuit colleagues. His sermons in Churches and at public events won wide acclaim and the admiration of his Iraqi friends. He had a dream, and during his term of office he supervised the construction of an Oriental Institute on the campus of Al-Hikma University. The building was a modest endeavor with classrooms, a library, and accommodations for seminars. Here he hoped to draw students and scholars from all over the world to create a better understanding and friendship among those of diverse cultural backgrounds. (Fr. Donohue)

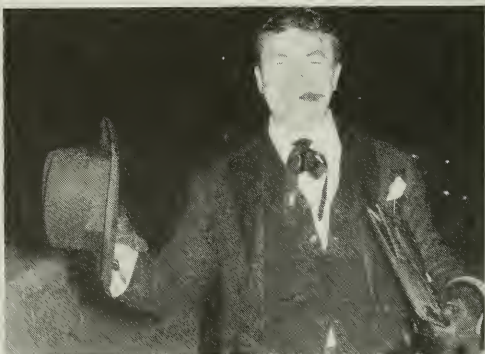
I am sending you, through my uncle Ramzi [Hermiz], two mementos of Fr. Richard McCarthy: a photocopy of a small pamphlet he had written on *The Morning Offering* and an audio cassette containing a homily he had given on a Holy Friday in the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, located in one of the suburbs of Baghdad [near Baghdad-al-Jadida]. To the best of my estimation, the original undated tape was made in the early sixties. I remember how my father had taken the



comparatively large, and very heavy, recording machine (the old reel type) with us to that church because Fr. McCarthy was celebrating Mass there and how my father wanted to record the homily, and so he did. I ask you to share the cassette and the "pamphlet" with the Fathers who would like to remember their friend and colleague, or with those who would just like to listen to his voice again. You may also want to make copies of the materials to be kept wherever the "permanent records" of the Jesuits' work are kept - if there is such a place. Perhaps, however, the Jesuits as people of God don't care much for permanent "records" as such, but believe mainly in the records of their work that are left in the hearts and minds of the people whose lives they touch. [Ed. Jesuits are incorrigible record keepers.] (This is a letter to Fr. Campbell from Su'dad N. Sesi, graduate of Al-Hikma and niece of Ramzi Hermiz.)

**Fr. Leo McDonough** was born 7/25/23 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1948-51, 59-68. Fr. "Chet" McDonough taught first at B.C. and later at A.H. after doing graduate studies in mathematics at Catholic University. He was also director of athletics, Dean of Students and Dean of the School of Business Administration. He was very much at home with people and had a wonderful sense of humor. A stranger, upon meeting him, felt at ease immediately. He had a uncanny knack of reading a person's mood. In talking with a student, he could quickly surmise if something was bothering the student. This empathy with a person's feelings applied to groups as well. At certain times of the year he would tell the dean:

"Everyone is ready for a party. What do you say?" In difficult circumstances, especially when the politics of the country made its presence felt on the campus, he was quick to notice and quick to take action. He was then an ideal Dean of Students.



*Fr. McDonough's borrowed costume*

If a person was in trouble, whether it be someone on campus or a complete stranger, they were lucky to run into Fr. McDonough. One can still picture him taking students out of





the city by bus for a picnic. He would clap his hands merrily while students sang to the accompaniment of the beat of the dumbuk. Or when at a party he would stroll around playing his accordion. (Fr. Ryan)

**Fr. Joseph Merrick** was born 8/13/1895 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1933-69. He was the ultimate missionary. On a hot summer afternoon, 120 degrees in the shade, while most of the citizens were napping I went out to visit the family of one of my students and congratulated myself on my selflessness. At that moment Fr. Merrick got off the bus. He had been out in the worst of the heat visiting the poor and was just now coming home. (Mr. Michael Toner)

Jesuits have always been my best friends throughout my 30 years of teaching at a girls' school, directed by our Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of the Presentation, and called "Presentation School", situated at Bab-el-Shargy, Baghdad, Iraq, in the central part of the city where all city events (good and bad) converged. Without the Jesuits' spiritual and material support, I wondered how I could have surmounted all the disappointments, hardships and discouragement which I had to endure. I would often see and talk with Fr. Merrick who used to celebrate Mass at our convent on most every Sunday for several years. After his Sunday Mass, I would serve him breakfast in the sacristy. There was no American food but there was always butter and cheese. This cheese was wrapped in foil or wax-paper. After the meal, in cleaning up, I often noticed that the two or three triangular pieces were gone, but so was their wrapper. I later learned that he had stuck them into his pocket to give to the poor he met on his way home to Baghdad College - a 40 minute walk. (Sister Joseph Pelletier, A.H. '66)

Fr. Merrick taught me by his words and deeds of kindness how to care for the needs of the poor and suffering. Many a time he took me with him to the "Armenian Camp" outside of Baghdad - a camp for Armenian war refugees from the turn of the century - to visit and to instruct in catechism. Today, because of his influence and example, I serve as a deacon at All Saints Parish in the foothills town of Twain Harte. I was ordained in the Chaldean rite in 1973 by the late Patriarch Paul Sheiko at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Turlock, California. (Edward Thomas Zoma)

One day, after school, I sat on a bench astride the field and watched Fr. Merrick as he stood motionless in the field, as if transfixed in one spot, in deep meditation. This lasted what

seemed to me then like an eternity. Little did I know that he was reaching for the hand of God. (Saib Shunia, B.C. '52)

When Fr. Merrick was attempting to visit a sick person at the Dar Es Salam Adventist Hospital he was stopped near the front door and told all the patients' spiritual needs were taken care of; there was no need for him to visit there. He replied as long as there was a patient in the hospital whom he knew about he would visit as often as he felt needed and no one on the staff would ever prevent him. (Br. Foley)

*The New York Times* carried an enthusiastic article recently concerning Andrew Wiles' proof of Fermat's last theorem on the 60th anniversary of another article (N.Y. Times 7/4/33) concerning Fr. Joseph Merrick's proof of the same theorem. Fr. Merrick was justifiably more modest "it is unlikely that I have succeeded since so many have tried - but where is the mistake?" His modesty was on target, because he had made a mistake and failed to prove it. But Fr. Merrick was a recidivist, he kept trying and could not let go of this elusive problem. He would corner all mathematics teachers who understood how mathematics works so that they would go over his revision of the flawed proof. They all gradually came to hate Mr. Fermat and his theorem. (Fr. MacDonnell)

Fr. Merrick was a religious who made do with little sleep. But he did fall asleep between his physics classes! He was known far and wide to be *Father Deaf*, although that was not the reason for his popularity as a confessor. He was kind, understanding, with great love of the poor. He opened a little office on Rashid St., where people could drop in for free counseling. He ended his days, well over 90 years, in the Campion Health Center in Weston, MA. (Fr. Fennell)

**Fr. John A. Mifsud** was born 12/7/1895 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1932-46, 47-64. The earliest Jesuits arriving in Baghdad came from several American Provinces. The California Province sent Fr. Mifsud, born on the Island of Malta. Because his name had a slightly ignoble meaning locally, he adopted the title of "Fr. Miff". Maltese language has many similarities to Arabic, so when Fr. Miff had a year off to study Arabic, he was accused of spending a year on his native tongue! He was extremely talented in languages, fluent in Maltese, Italian, Spanish, French, Arabic and English. He loved Lebanon in the summer: it gave him a chance to meet Europeans for a change. He would miss American expressions. One evening at recreation after listening to baseball talk, he had a question for Fr. Sheehan



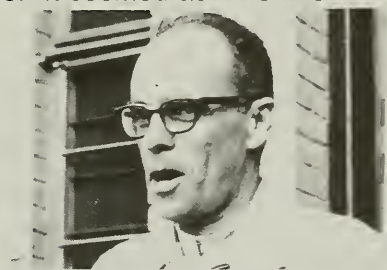
about the infield: "What is this *short stuff* you're talking about?" He left Baghdad in the mid-sixties, retired to Malta, where he spent his final years. (Fr. MacDonnell)

**Mr. Muhammad Serour** taught me Arabic. My classmates and I were pleasantly surprised at how well we did in the government exam in Arabic literature, and realized that it was because of this genteel Egyptian teacher with the dower half-smiling face - poetry of the pre-Islamic Jahiliya, speeches of the Prophet and the Imam Ali, poetry of the Memlukes dynasties, and methods of sentence parsing. With his matter-of-fact monotone voice he made the time and place of the Arabic subject he was teaching reappear in every class period.

In the middle of the fourth year, I fought to get a coveted front row seat in class, near John Melcon who moved down there earlier, to be nearer that teacher. The current emotions of the Suez war did not disrupt the scenes of the poets. The lessons continued. The appreciation for Arabic literature which I learned at Baghdad College is still enjoyable. After thirty years of worldwide engineering, I chuckle to myself while driving in tiny Holland, and recall the rules for Arabic diminutive nouns. Or composing poetry in the Arabic meter while on a long drive in Texas. Not to shortchange the values of English lessons by Fr. LaBran of Lancelot and Guinevere in their mime of devotion, still for Arabic literature, Mohammed Serour got top marks. (Allen Svoboda, B.C. '58)

**Fr. Joseph O'Connor** was born 12/8/23 in Worcester, MA. and worked in Baghdad during the years 1953-56, 61-69. He was my idea of what the ideal missionary should be. His energy level was unbelievable, he was indefatigable always on the go. His warmth, his ready smile and his ebullient good humor was available to everyone. It seemed as if he knew

everyone in Baghdad and they all loved him and when he entered a home, it lit up. His enthusiasm was contagious. He had a personal magnetism that drew others to him. His sincere concern for others was quite apparent. (Mr. Michael Toner)



*Fr. Owens addressing the assembly of students just before his death*

**Fr. John V. Owens** was born 1/13/24 and worked in



Baghdad during the years 1957-67. Fr. Owens has been mentioned elsewhere in connection with his courageous death from cancer. It was then that he gave a moving talk on the meaning of death and made a profound impact on the students gathered at a special noon assembly in front of the Administration building. In order to get there he had to be driven over by car because he did not have much stamina. He had enough though to push the car away from the residence where it was parked. A Father (who wishes to be nameless) volunteered to drive him to his appointment at the assembly, but had never driven this German automobile before with its strange shifts. He could find everything except the reverse gear and time was getting short. Fr. Owens took matters into his own hands, jumped out of the car and proceeded to push the vehicle away from the wall so that the novice driver could "get him to the church on time".

Unlike Fr. Gerry, Fr. Owens did not have his own classroom so he was kidded by the other Jesuits whenever he was seen carrying his "box of bones" to his biology class. Most Jesuits did not know anything about biology and could only guess what he used the bones for. He had a very prayerful spirit but was very outgoing and friendly, liked people and had a finely tuned sense of humor. He enjoyed using his wit on other Jesuits who took themselves too seriously. (Fr. MacDonnell)

**Fr. Walter Pelletier** was born 12/19/29 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1954-57, 63-69. During his years at Baghdad College he was a very popular geometry teacher among the students and considered a very dependable and responsible worker by the faculty. He was a successful basketball coach as well as player and instilled in his team a desire to win, not just to "wear out a uniform." He had a wonderful sense of humor which helped him in his job as disciplinarian. At his first noon assembly of the first, second and third year students, he was introduced to this job by Fr. Kelly with the words: "Here is the new muawin, you won't see me here any more." Fr. Kelly then stepped back and fell off the narrow porch out of sight into the bushes below. Fr. Pelletier had a immediate challenge to his ability to maintain composure and to send some 700 delighted students to their classes in a dignified and orderly fashion.

**Fr. William Rice** worked in Baghdad during the years 1932-39. He knew French quite well but nothing of "Arabic when he arrived. With his little community of Jesuits he had to find living quarters, a school building or one to be made into



a school, learn the local education system, establish good relations with the Ministry of Education, be accepted by the local clergy, and the Catholic hierarchy, consisting of a Chaldean Patriarch, Syrian Archbishop, Armenian Archbishop and a Latin Archbishop who was also the Apostolic Delegate not to mention their Orthodox counterparts. That was the problem, roughly sketched for Fr. Rice by the Jesuits in 1932.

Yet Fr. "Bill" survived it all and won the hearts of many people. Years later I was at one of the Government offices, perhaps the Customs; one of the younger clerks called me over to ask me about Fr. Rice. It seems that Fr. Bill used to "work" the neighborhood on his afternoon break. He practiced the few words of Arabic he had found time to learn by chatting with the neighborhood kids. The customs clerk had been one of those youngsters. He asked for news of Fr. Rice and indicated he had fond memories of their meetings, as proof he pulled from his wallet a picture of Fr. Rice, a picture he carried around with him. It must have been more than his personality that impressed Iraqis. Since he talked French fluently as did the local clergy, they both got to know each other quite well. When the Apostolic Delegate had to leave Iraq, Fr. Rice was readily accepted as temporary Apostolic Delegate. (Fr. Fennell)

**Fr. Joseph Ryan** was born 12/4/20 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1945-47, 54-68. He taught at Baghdad College from 1945-48. He then returned to the United States for four years of theology and ordination, after which he obtained a M.S. degree in chemistry at Boston College. He returned to Baghdad in January of 1955, expecting to resume teaching at Baghdad College. But on his arrival he learned that, in view of the preparations for the opening of Al-Hikma University, he would become Dean. From 1956 to 1966 he was Dean and from 1966-68 he was Academic Vice-President. In 1962-63, while he studied Arabic at the Jesuit residence on Rawaf St. near the White House, Fr. Frederick Kelly was acting Dean in his place.

When the Al-Hikma Jesuits left Baghdad in November 1968, Fr. Ryan returned to the United States and became a Fellow of the Cambridge Center for Social Studies in Cambridge, Massachusetts. From 1971 to 1975 he was a member of the Center for the Study of the Modern Arab World at St. Joseph's University in Beirut. He returned to the United States and was Rector of the Jesuit Community at Holy Cross College from 1977-83. In January 1984 he went to Amman, Jordan as the

Director of the office of the Pontifical Mission for Palestine. After seven years in Amman, he returned to the United States. He is now a spiritual director and retreat director at Fairfield University in Fairfield, Connecticut.

In the early seventies Fr. Ryan conducted six extensive national speaking tours in the United States, each tour lasting two months. In public lectures, in interviews for newspapers and on TV and radio, he spoke about the problem of Palestine, the city of Jerusalem, the Catholic Church and the Middle East, the responsibility of Americans regarding peace in the Middle East, and anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. (Fr. MacDonnell)

All the Jesuits at Al-Hikma positively influenced my life. They made me understand the joys of the Catholic faith. Their dedication, grace, and values were worthy of imitation. By far, Rev. Joseph L. Ryan remains at the top of my list. Without him I would not have been able to go to college, a dream I always cherished. When I lost my business and all of my money 20 years after graduation, he was there for me. He gave me a job and helped me pick up the pieces. To me, he is a true saint to whom I shall always be grateful. Rev. Robert B. Campbell and Rev. Joseph F. MacDonnell also are particularly dear to my heart. (Edward Butros, A.H. '68)

**Fr. Solomon Sara** was born 5/1/30 in Mangaish, Iraq and worked in Baghdad during the years 1957-60. He has been mentioned in Chapter 5 during the discussion of Jesuit Vocations. When he returned to Iraq in 1947 for his teaching experience, he found he had plenty to do. Besides his teaching duties he had plenty to do such as running the school library, directing the junior section of the boarding school, running seven catechetical centers for Baghdad public school children and being the secretary to the Chaldean Patriarch for ecumenical affairs.



*Fr. Sara visiting the homes of workmen*

In 1960 he returned to Weston College for theology, then to Georgetown University to study linguistics for the express





purpose of joining the proposed center at Al-Hikma for graduate work. Unfortunately these plans were never realized because of the expulsion of the Jesuits. He has been a member of the Linguistic Department at Georgetown University since 1969. (Fr. MacDonnell)

**Fr. Francis Sarjeant** was born 7/21/00 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1934-48. He succeeded Fr. Rice as Superior, and one evening counted the objects he carried to the roof to prepare for sleep. He carried a loaded flit gun to kill off any sand flies that had managed to get inside the net, brush to remove the dead flies from the pillow, a woolen belly-band to ward off cramps when the temperature dropped 40 degrees, a small alarm clock, just in case the scholastic appointed to ring the bell at 4 a.m. failed to fulfill his appointed duty! On Rogation Days, the litanies were recited by all gathered in chapel at 4:20 a.m., so the first Mass could begin at 4:30! Fr. Sarjeant's favorite expressions were: "Come in, Father, and take your shoes off!" When leaving his room, he would encourage us to "Keep rushing forward on your white charger!" Like Fr. Rice, he spoke fluent French to handle all clerical and Episcopal visitors, and he was the confessor of the Apostolic Delegate. He later joined the community at Holy Cross College in Worcester, MA. (Fr. Fennell)

**Fr. Leo J. Shea** was born 12/28/03 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1938-47, 48-69. If one had a bad cold, he would advise going to bed and forget class. He called himself "an old man but a young priest". People would come to him looking for a donation of blood, but a bout of malaria prevented him donating his, so he would ask other Fathers to donate theirs. One pointed out that those seeking blood would refuse to give blood to their close relatives! After leaving Baghdad, he began a ministry in Egypt to help Christians in family planning. He died October 1993. (Fr. Fennell)

**Fr. William Sheehan** was born 9/1/02 and worked in Baghdad during the years 1936-47, 48-66. He taught math and physics: his laboratory on the second floor of the Science Building was always kept in perfect order. During the marvelous Baghdad weather of the Christmas holidays, he loved to bat out long fly balls to the scholastics on the empty baseball field.

Students of Baghdad College loved handball, played using hands and also using the feet to kick the ball after the first bounce. The handball courts never had a moment's rest before





Minerals with the request to assist them in an English language program for their students. When he was expelled from Baghdad he was assigned to this work and spent the next three years at the University, directing the program and doing some teaching. (Fr. MacDonnell)

## The Lay Volunteer Program ("Misteria")

During the last decade of the mission a Lay Volunteer program had developed, partly due to the zeal of people like Fr. LaBran who by this time was a chaplain at Holy Cross College. This program was the precursor of today's "Jesuit International Volunteer Corps" (J.I.V.C.) and on a smaller scale the five "Jesuit Volunteer Corps" (JVC) programs: East, Midwest, Northwest, Southwest and South. College graduates - mostly American - came and lived in the Jesuit Community for two years and taught their specialty in the schools - mostly English and mathematics. They received their room and board as well as a modest stipend (ID 20 or \$56 per month) to cover their expenses for the year so that they left Baghdad neither richer nor poorer than when they arrived. Each year the number of these altruistic young volunteers increased. From one single courageous man, Richard T. Wotruba of Holy Cross '60, who came for the 1960-61 year the program rapidly grew to about 13 volunteers a year. Some spent two years and some spent one. By 1969 there had been a total of 90 Lay Volunteer who had at some time participated in the educational work of the Jesuits.



*Some lay volunteers on their way to class*





Jesuit Lay Volunteers at Baghdad College  
44 came and 17\* stayed for 2 years

## 1960-1961

Richard T. Wotruba Holy Cross '60

## 1962-1963

Michael L. Hanley\* Holy Cross '62

William C. Joern Holy Cross '62

William Johnson, Jr. Holy Cross '62

Richard E. Zulkey Holy Cross '62

## 1963-1964

Richard Appleyard

Harold R. Farmer\* Boston College '63

Joseph F. Finn, Jr. Holy Cross '63

Thomas P. Hennessey Holy Cross '63

Edward Reynolds Boston College '63

Paul T. Sullivan Holy Cross '63

Michael J. Toner\* Holy Cross '63

## 1964-1965

Gerald Colbert Holy Cross '64

Michael W. Costello Boston College '64

Robert J. Dumouchel Holy Cross '64

Michael Ford (S.J.) Boston College '64

(Maj.) James Kealey Boston College '64

Daniel Keleher\* Boston College '64

Dr. Robert Nist Holy Cross '64

Eugene Palumbo Amherst '64

## 1965-1966

William Ahmuty\* Holy Cross '65

John J. Carroll, Jr. Boston College '65

John J. Feeney Boston College '65

John Houston\*

A. Michael Hutchins\* Holy Cross '65

Diarmid M. Lucey Boston College '65

Michael McDermott\* Holy Cross '65

Thomas O'Meara Fairfield Univ. '65

John P. Quinn Boston College '65

## 1966-1967

John Bruch, Jr.\* Holy Cross '66

Carmen Fucillo\* Boston College '66

Richard Hoeffling

Dr. Stephen Kramer\* Holy Cross '66

Edward McNamara\* Holy Cross '66

Edward Scanlan\* Holy Cross '66

Frank A. Sikora, MD\* Boston College '66

Joseph Trainer Holy Cross '66

E. Denis Walsh Boston College '66

## 1967-1968

James Callahan\* Holy Cross '67

Edward M. Cooney\* Holy Cross '67

David Traverso Boston College '66

## 1968-1969

David Traverso

Robert Finlay, Jr. Holy Cross '68

Roger Raslavsky Boston College '65

John R. Robbert Holy Cross '68

Jesuit Lay Volunteers at Al-Hikma  
35 came and 10\* stayed for 2 years

## 1961-1962

John Dempsey Boston College '59

Joseph Flibbert B. C. '63 MA

Albert Wheeler Boston College '63

## 1962-1963

Bernard Bebel Boston College '63

Charles Faucher Boston College '63

Eugene Mulcahy, RIP B. C. '61 & '65

## 1963-1964

Hubert Howard Boston College '63

John E. Jordan, Jr.\* Boston College '63

Seamus O'Cleireacan

Dr. William Ferrante

## 1964-1965

Vincent Amabile Holy Cross '64

Timothy G. Hayes Holy Cross '64

Daniel Jamros, S.J.\*\* H. C. '63 & B.C. '64

Atherton Lowry\* Georgetown '64

John Dempsey Boston College '64

Paul Murdock\* Boston College '64

(Asuncion & Joseph van Arendonk)\*\*

## 1965-1966

Paul Belford Boston College '65

Nicholas Cafarelli\*

John T. Cummings\*

Stephen Griffin\* Boston College '65

Sr. M. Ligouri

Sr. Blanche Marie

## 1966-1967

Joseph Aieta Holy Cross '64

John Rossetti Boston College '61

Sr. Edward Cecelia, CSJ

Sr. Mary Columba, IHM\*

Bro. Germain Fadhouh, CSC

Jochen Langer\*

(Frank DeFalco) {Fulbright}

## 1967-1968

John Dodig\* Fairfield Univ. '66

Edward Giegengack\* Villanova & F.U. '66

Dirk Jan van Lottum\*

Mary Rose Sidhani

Jeanne Brennan

Sr. Sheila Gaaney, IHM

Sr. Mary Louise, S.L.

Sr. Aurelia Altenhcfem, O.P.

Philipp & Helga Müller

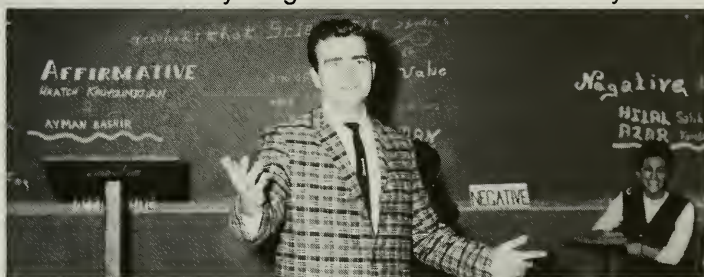


These young teachers had a marvelous effect on the student body as well as on the Jesuit community. All were quite different individuals from different backgrounds - and even different countries and this broadened the vision of the students they taught. Students learned from them a great deal about the dedication of Catholic laymen. The Baghdad Jesuits, on the other hand became well attuned to the attitudes of modern Catholic college graduates.

A tremendous benefit of the Jesuit educational contribution in Baghdad came from the volunteered assistance of young lay men and women from several countries who offered their talents and gifts to Baghdad College and Al-Hikma University.

These Jesuit volunteers were very generous, lively people, reflecting a dedication to the same goals and aspirations of the Jesuits in Baghdad. They were generous well beyond their teaching assignments. Many remained involved in Middle Eastern and international affairs. Four became Jesuits.

Especially noticeable were the groups of graduates from American Jesuit Colleges. Forty-four graduates from Boston College, Holy Cross College and Fairfield University during the years 1961 through 1969 taught at Baghdad College. Seventeen of these young men remained a second year.



*Moderator Mr. Eugene Mulcahy*

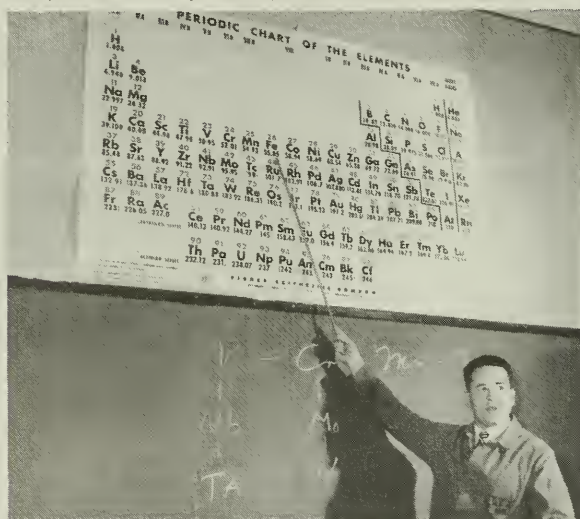
At Al-Hikma approximately the same number of volunteers came, principally from the United States but also from Ireland, Germany, Holland and the Philippines. This included fifteen scholars on sabbaticals, including seven Nuns. Their generous services indeed added an international flavor to the faculty. Their influence continues as a number of these men and women later welcomed their former Baghdad students into graduate work in their own institutions. (Fr. O'Connor)

## Lay Volunteers

The memories of their experiences in Baghdad were very vivid in the minds of these volunteers and some of them expressed their opinions about the people that meant most to them.



As a young and young-looking teacher, I think I was an inviting target for certain students who would take advantage of my inexperience. The mudeer, Fr. Powers became my mentor, and many times helped me to maneuver out of difficult situations. I admired his coolness under fire, as did many other Misteria, and a favorite story involved the arrival of Iraqi soldiers at the front door of the administration building, whereupon Fr. Powers agreed to talk with them . . . "Just send them in one at a time." I don't like to focus on one Jesuit however because the entire Community was something to behold in its dedication to God, to the school and to each other. My father had always told me that the Jesuits were "quite hospitable", and they more than filled that description. The Jesuits I knew were giants, and I am grateful for having known them early in my life. (Mr. Ed Reynolds)



*Chemist, Mr. John Dempsey 1962*

My fellow Misteria were a fun-loving group who were also very dedicated to their students and they were quite adventuresome. More importantly, I think we encouraged each other when things were difficult. The Misteria community made many things possible.

I've been very fortunate to have the opportunity of participating in medical relief efforts to Haiti in the past couple of years. We do cleft lip repairs and other surgery in the field and at a clinic in Jeremy, which is on the north shore of the southern tip, about 8 hours by truck from





Port aux Prince. The clinic is run by an order of medical missionary sisters, and I confess to taking pleasure in an atmosphere which is terribly reminiscent of Baghdad. (Mr. Ed Reynolds)

My students at Baghdad College taught me how to study. Prior to my teaching experience I had placed tremendous emphasis on my own originality and creativity, and much less emphasis on retaining and understanding the work of others. When I corrected their exams - I tried to reward "originality" but quickly found that it was sometimes used to mask a lack of familiarity with the material. The students who succeeded were the "grinds", in spite of my prejudice in favor of the flamboyant. More important, when I saw how thoroughly my students would learn material in a second language, I knew that I would never again feel comfortable with a sloppy approach to learning myself. My students were earnest and gentle, with a reverence for learning which I had not appreciated before coming to Baghdad. Both Christian and Muslim students valued their faith, and felt no embarrassment about it. I liked that. (Mr. Ed Reynolds)

I think all the Baghdadis must worry about what the Gulf War did to the Iraqi people. I know that I have great difficulty reconciling my knowledge of the gentle people I knew with the terrible violence which was unleashed.

The children of the workmen were a special project of mine and I taught them to speak English. At Christmas time I taught them to sing Christmas carols and we performed for the "Fatheria" as well as at the Chaldean seminary. When we were at the seminary and while we were singing "We Wish you A Merry Christmas" two of the children spontaneously jumped up on the stage and started shaking hands, wishing each other a "Merry Christmas". The smiles on their faces and the spontaneity of it all just knocked me out. It was one of the greatest feelings I have ever experienced. It was pure joy and showed me that I was having an impact. (Mr. Mike Toner)



*The Jesuit Superior General, Fr. Arrupe visiting the lay volunteers*

On a trip to Ur of the Chaldees, Fr. John McCarthy and Mr. Kerry Holland with a group of lay volunteers got lost at night in the desert to the west of the Euphrates. As they were driving in circles, a light started to flash from a Bedouin camp in the distance to attract their attention. Apparently the Arabs knew they were in difficulty. So they went to the Bedouin camp, accepted their hospitality; then proceeded in the correct direction.

Misters who taught them. The ones with John Robert's New Orleans accent were the best. By Thanksgiving and Christmas the first year Baghdad College students understanding of English was incredibly good. As a teacher I learned something: that motivated kids can do anything including learning math with different numbers from men who do not even speak their language. (Mr. Finlay)

The lay volunteers not only gave a great deal but gained very much in their own personal lives. This was quite apparent at a lay volunteer-Jesuit reunion weekend held at Fairfield University in 1974 to commemorate the fifth anniversary of expulsion. Some 37 lay volunteers and 23 Jesuits participated. By this time all volunteers had done many interesting things, such as gotten married, had children, earned higher degrees, moved ahead in industry or taken teaching positions. But the remarkable thing about this reunion was that the conversations and discussions never seemed to veer away from their experiences teaching the youth of Iraq. One of the lay volunteers, Mr. Joseph Flibbert, mentions his own reaction.



I'm currently Professor of English at Salem State College, where I've been teaching for the past 24 years. I have my Ph.D. from the University of Illinois and have written a book on Herman Melville. I am widowed, remarried, and the father of three sons. One of them is fluent in Arabic, having studied it at Georgetown, the University of Virginia, and the American University in Cairo. He is working on a Ph.D. in Political Science at Columbia, with a concentration on Arabic Studies. Another son is working on a law degree in Washington. The third is fluent in Japanese and is currently working as an international relations coordinator for a small city in Japan. So as you can see, my experiences as a lay volunteer in Iraq have had some influence on my children's professional interests.

I came to Al-Hikma University in September, 1961 as a lay volunteer, ready for adventure and left a year later with a deep appreciation for the good things the Jesuits were doing in Iraq, a strong affection for the Iraqi people and their culture, and a better understanding of myself and my own culture. I learned a whole lot more than I taught, thanks to the patience, experience, and insights of my Jesuit colleagues, and to the hospitality, friendship, and generosity of my students. I have especially fond memories of Fr. Leo McDonough, who loaned me his American music when he sensed I was homesick, Fr. Kelly, who let me help out with the basketball team and who bailed me out when I got over my head with the Drama Society I started, and Fr. Joe Ryan, whose tips on how to behave kept me from many social blunders. My deepest debt is to Fr. Walter Young, friend and confidant, a great "street" priest who took me with him into the city and introduced me to some of the best experiences I had in Iraq. More than 30 years later, I still have vivid memories of the basketball exploits of Shamuel "Shumi" Yusuf and Hikmat Basmaji, of the leadership skills of Waiel Hindu and Wilson Benjamin, of the acting talent of Kamal Dinkha, of the academic brilliance of Fawzi (Habib) Hermes, Sami Madros, and Sami al-Banna and of the fun-loving nature of Adil Wadi and Sirbest Qazzaz. It was a good time. It was the best of times. (Mr. Joseph Flibbert)

When Dr. Bill Ferrante had to return to the States in mid-second semester due to illness, a remarkable testimony was paid to him from all his students who sadly crowded the airport on the morning of his departure. A



small group of them stood with one of the Fathers sad and silent. The students had raised a question among themselves and then posed it to the Jesuit. "Father, why does God allow such a thing to happen?" God gave us a tough, demanding but very fair teacher for a few months. Dr. Ferrante liked us very much and worked hard for us. We realize that. But now he has been taken from us, even before we finish the school year. Why? The Jesuit Father agreed that the question is an important one and suggested that they think about it, ponder it for a few days, and see what response they might come up with. A few days later, the small group approached the Jesuit on the campus at Al-Hikma and asked to talk. "We have an answer, we think! We've decided that perhaps God gives us such a fine man for a short time to show us that such goodness and generosity is possible. It is real. It can be done. We've experienced that. Maybe God is telling us that now it is up to us to choose to become equally good men." (Fr. O'Connor)



*Aerial view of Baghdad College*



## Chapter 9

# An Auspicious 35th Anniversary: Great Expectations



*Blessed are those who hunger and  
thirst for righteousness,  
for they shall be satisfied.  
Matthew 5:6*

### An auspicious year of academic promise

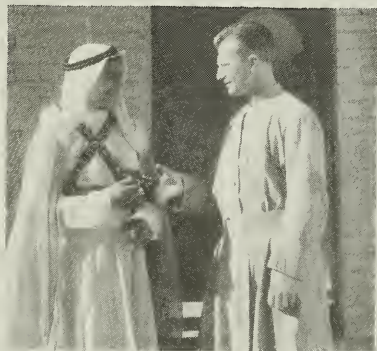
The year 1967 preceding the dismissal was the most promising year for the Baghdad Jesuits. The pioneering years dedicated to survival were over and previous suspicions had dissipated. Wonderful opportunities indicated a promising future, not only for the two schools which had grown beyond expectation, but also for the ecumenical work with the varied Christian Churches, the spiritual direction of alumni, the Lay Volunteer program, and the opening of a Jesuit novitiate.

Baghdad College was proud of its slogan: "an Iraqi school for Iraqi boys". Offering five years of English, mathematics, history and Arabic as well as three years of physics, chemistry and biology for the science section, it also boasted of a commercial section. With an enrollment of about 1100 it accepted very capable applicants from the top 10% of the primary schools. Tuition was only ID 50 and more than 20% of the students received financial aid. The graduates had wonderful success in the government-run baccalaureate exams which determined a

student's future and which college would take them; Medical, Engineering, Business or Law. In 1967 while only 45% of the 30,000 Iraqi students taking these exams passed, 96% of the Baghdad College students passed, and seven out of the top ten in the country came from Baghdad College. When the local newspapers reported that the first six highest marks were scored by government school graduates, General Rashid Mukhlis who had been a Minister in several past government Cabinets wrote in to a leading newspaper protesting this false propaganda. He wrote: "The top three students in Iraq were from Baghdad College. The second of them just graduated from there. I know him. He is my son." This notice appeared a few days before the 7/17/68 revolution.



*Some of the learned scholars who did so well in the government exams*



*All firearms had to be surrendered*



Al-Hikma was in its 11th year and was one of the earliest Jesuit Universities to become co-educational. In 1962; already one fifth of its 700 students were women. The number of good applicants was steadily increasing and alumni were getting impressive jobs after graduation. Some Al-Hikma professors were involved in the UNESCO revision of mathematical education for all the Arab states. Another favorable sign was the growth of the Jesuit Lay Volunteer program bringing annually about a dozen young American and European college graduates to work on the mission for a few years.

Of all the previous 36 years of the mission, perhaps the most encouraging was this school year 1966-67. The pioneering years dedicated to survival seemed to be over because earlier Muslim suspicions of proselytizing efforts had generally disappeared. The promise of future opportunities (more than the absence of past dangers) made that year very encouraging: opportunities for Baghdad College, Al-Hikma University, Islamic studies, ecumenical work with the various Christians of Iraq and the spiritual direction of alumni.

Even misunderstandings were taken care of with more dispatch than any other time in the previous 35 years. An example concerned Fr. Nash's photography for the *Al-Hikma* Yearbook.

I had just admitted to the University the son of an Iraqi General who thanked me and was about to leave the office when three white shirts (C.I.D.) burst into the room to arrest me for interrogation at Rashid Military Camp. The general did not like this intrusion and spoke to the white shirts, slapping the swagger stick against his thighs. They convinced him there was no mistake and that "those were their orders". He left the room, I went with the white shirts and we arrived at Rashid Camp to be ushered into the office of the Camp Commander, Abu Jibben. Present also were two civilian judges and another military officer. Abu Jibben started the interrogation in a very intimidating manner "Why are you taking pictures of my airfield?" I denied that I was, acknowledging that I took pictures of our campus from the roof of the building on Al-Hikma property. His airfield happened to be in the distant background and when the photo was printed in the yearbook I had replaced the airfield with a false sky. He had the Yearbook on his desk along with the false sky.

Just then the phone rang. Abu Jibben kept saying "Yes Sir!" "Yes Sir!" and as he hung up the phone his manner softened and he let me leave. I learned afterwards that the Field General had gone to the Minister of Defense and demanded

to know "Why are you interrogating that Father who just admitted my son to his University?" (Fr. Nash)

### **1967: Baghdad College's 35th anniversary**

Things looked so promising during the year of 1967 that staging was purchased for the graduation exercises. Henceforth, for the first time the graduations would be held on the Baghdad College campus instead of in the rented Gardens of Baghdad. So all the equipment necessary was purchased and the stage was set up on the great lawn between the administration building and the chapel.

During its 11 years Al-Hikma had impressed many Iraqis. Since 1960 under General Abdul Karim Qasim, Prime Minister and Leader of the Revolution, it had become the custom for a high Iraqi Government official to be present at Al-Hikma graduations. Al-Hikma had so impressed the Baghdad bishops that they wanted an inter-ritual major seminary under the auspices of Al-Hikma. During that same Spring of 1967 the possibilities in the Islamic apostolate were quite encouraging. Fr. Richard McCarthy, S.J., was well known to Muslim scholars for his books in Arabic on the theologians of Islam, al Ashari and al Baqillani. Fr. John Donohue, S.J., was becoming a familiar figure to the leaders of the Shiite (Shee'a) sect of Muslims and was a welcome visitor to their holy places in Karbala and Najaf. In 1967 construction of the Oriental Institute began on the campus of Al-Hikma. It was to be a place for pursuing research into Islamics, oriental languages and the many manuscripts on early Christianity buried in the museums and religious houses of the northern parts of Iraq and Syria and southern part of Turkey.



*Al-Hikma Jesuits enjoying Christmas*



*Aerial view of Al-Hikma looking west towards the Tigris River*



Apostolic work in the Christian community also was quite hopeful in the Spring of 1967. Seven of the Baghdad Jesuits were bi-ritual; members of the Latin rite as well as of one of the various oriental rites of the Catholic Church. Some Jesuit were now available to celebrate Mass in the Chaldean, Syrian, Melkite and Maronite rites. A larger number of Jesuits went to some of the Baghdad parishes to celebrate Sunday Mass, although not many were able to preach in Arabic. A big event for Baghdad Christians was the annual Novena of Grace run by the Jesuits in the Chaldean Cathedral, where the services seemed to be more crowded than at any other time of the year. The retreat movement (open and closed) among Christians in Iraq was flourishing. Apart from the regular retreats for the students, about 10 smaller closed



retreats a year were given to alumni and adults on the two campuses.

During the spring of that year, 1967, the lay volunteers had sorted out all the details for a summer camp for the Baghdad College students to work with the youth of Iraq, combining athletic events and studies. For many students it would have been the first time the hot summer months were put to good use.

## **Some imaginative and creative undertakings**

That same spring (1968) there was much optimism in the air and plans were being made by so many for a very busy summer. Other proposals are mentioned in Appendix D but here are listed some specific projects.

In addition to their academic camp, the lay volunteers were preparing a soccer football league on Baghdad College campus for the poor boys of the city. Plans were being formed for reunions of various classes of alumni with discussion groups for the Muslims and retreats for the Christians. Candidates were being examined for the entrance into the new Jesuit novitiate. Fr. Guay constructed two geodesic dome houses for the families of our watchmen who patrolled the Al-Hikma campus night and day and had given years of faithful service since the University opened. Fr. Guay also submitted plans for a small chapel with a unique design that featured three geodesic domes.



*A synod of Chaldean Bishops held at Baghdad College*



## **Increase in alumni activities**

In the late sixties, on their return visits to the Fathers, the alumni spoke of the hardships and setbacks in facing the many difficulties and problems of everyday life in Iraq. They spoke of a need not only of Jesuit encouragement but that of their former classmates to fill the lack of intellectual and spiritual stimulation. The students felt that they left school at an age too immature to carry out the principles and ideals they learned by themselves but would be helped greatly by continual contact with the Fathers and older alumni. They organized a program at regular intervals of meetings and activities for alumni. They would be broken down into groups according to age and profession and whatever Jesuits were familiar with a certain group would devote their time and energy to that group, be it medical or engineering students, or graduates of a certain class.

## **Opening the Novitiate**

Each year several of our graduates expressed the desire to become Jesuits, but parental opposition proved to be too much for the young men. Their desires were frustrated by parents who were justifiably apprehensive about their sons being moved to another country 8000 miles away and foreign to their own. There had been no Iraqi Jesuit vocation since 1956 and only six Jesuit vocations in the 37 years of the mission. Part of this parental opposition arose from the parents' desire that their son add to the prestige of the family by becoming a doctor or engineer.

More often, however, a genuine concern for the welfare of the boy prevented consent. Parents feared they would not see him for seven years; that he was not old enough for such a sudden change of culture and environment so different from their own; that if he left the Jesuit Order in America, he would be too ashamed to return to his family in Iraq; that seminarians have a subnormal and arduous life.

To confront these objections the Fathers decided that same year, 1967, to start a Jesuit Novitiate in Baghdad. It began the following year in September 1968 at the Superior's residence of St. Joseph in the middle of Baghdad. The idea was that the novices would be separated, but not distant from their parents; that they could receive their early training amid the environment in which they would later work and in accordance with the decrees worked out by the Thirty-First Jesuit General Congregation (held in 1965-1966). [A General Congregation is a deliberative body of Jesuits chosen as representatives of all the Jesuit provinces throughout the world.]

Jesuit Novices could keep up social contact with their

contemporaries and at the same time study Arabic and take on Novitiate programs more suited for their future apostolate in this country. Most especially their life would be seen as a dignified and happy life and so might well act as a catalyst for future vocations. In its first year when one novice had plunged himself into the program with enthusiasm, many of the objections voiced before the project was undertaken evaporated. Anti-American feelings had hampered such efforts so it was remarkable to get the Novitiate started at all in those trying times.



*Fr. John McCarthy directing the choir*

On January 5, 1968 a decision was made to open a Novitiate and Fr. Morgan was sent to explore oriental Jesuit Novitiates in Bombay, Hong Hong, Taiwan and Japan. On September 5, 1968 at the age of 18 Steve Bonian came accompanied by his father and sister to start his novitiate (the superior's residence) at Rawaf St. in Bettaween. Steve was Chaldean and was born in Iran while his two sisters, Svetlana and Maristella were born in Iraq. He began his long retreat the next day at Sulaikh. During the Novitiate he studied Arabic and theology at Al-Hikma, took Chaldean lessons and did pastoral work at the Cathedral in Bettaween.

On June 26, 1969 Steve Bonian left Baghdad with Fr. Morgan and went to Bikfiah to finish his first year. In September it was decided that he go to Ireland to finish his other year of the novitiate. He pronounced his vows a year later and was ordained





February 27, 1982 in the Chaldean, Maronite and Latin rites at the Maronite church in Jamaica Plain, MA. He is now doing pastoral and catechetical work in Jerusalem where he lives at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Jerusalem.



*Opening day of school began with Mass for all Christians*

### **Oriental Institute**

On July 4, 1968 in a quiet ceremony, Fr. Richard McCarthy laid the corner stone for the Oriental Institute. It was to be built by Fr. Guay with funds donated by the Gulbenkian Foundation and was expected to be completed by the end of the 1969 Summer.

The Oriental Institute was the dream of Fr. McCarthy who planned each detail, composed a convincing rationale for it and found a way to make it happen. It was meant to be an integral part of Al-Hikma University with the same general objectives proper to every true university: the communication, diffusion, and enrichment of human knowledge with a view to equipping the student to live as rich and fruitful a life as possible, both as an individual human person and as a member of a particular society which has a definite role to play in the perfecting of the larger society which embraces the whole human person.

The Oriental Institute had for its principal objective the promotion of inter-cultural understanding, esteem, and cooperation. East and west can meet on cultural and intellectual levels for mutual enrichment and profit. The entire work of the Institute would help to achieve this through the medium of special lectures, conferences, seminars, and meetings both local and

regional. It would work toward undergraduate and graduate training in the various fields of study; training in methods of research and finally publications of the results of research projects.

This year gave all the Jesuits and their colleagues a warm sense of self confidence because of all the reasons noted above: the struggle for survival and disruptive suspicions seemed to be a thing of the past. Both schools had grown beyond expectation and wonderful opportunities in a spiritual and scholarly direction, ecumenical work especially with the varied Christian Churches, religious vocations and the lay volunteer program were all tremendously encouraging.

As it turned out this year was merely the calm before the storm.



*The last building started by the Jesuits: the Oriental Institute shown on a postcard sent by Fr. James Larkin to his sister Helen*



## Chapter 10

# Expulsion and Dispersion



*Every sincere person ought to be more ready to give a favorable interpretation to an other's obscure position than to condemn it.*  
*from: The Presupposition of St. Ignatius Loyola in his Spiritual Exercises*

### Preliminaries

On November 25, 1968, the 28 Jesuits working at Al-Hikma University were expelled from Baghdad after being given only five days to get out of the country. In spite of threats, hundreds of students came to the airport to bid farewell to the Fathers in a tearful departure. Nine months later the other 33 American Jesuits were expelled from Baghdad College. Both schools were "Iraqized". This was a new word for the Jesuits and indicated that the Iraqi Government took control of the schools without compensation and without claiming ownership. The Jesuits' property of 193 [168 + 25] acres with 14 major buildings including the contents of two libraries and seven very modern laboratories were taken over by the new Baath Socialist Government whose ideology prohibits private education.

Still, Muslim professors from Baghdad University pleaded, although in vain, with Iraq's new President "You cannot treat the Jesuits this way: they have brought many innovations to Iraqi education, and have enriched Iraq by their presence." The closing of these two celebrated landmarks ended the 37-year Jesuit Mission in Iraq, an effort of 61 Jesuits, 14 lay volunteers, 70 Iraqi educators and many American benefactors.

Two things happened in the previous year that led to the expulsion



of the Jesuits: the 1967 *June War* between the Arab states and Israel and the coup d'etat that brought the Baath Socialist Party into power in July, 1968. The Arab states were aware of American aid to Israel during the war which included air cover as well as very advanced technology and so they justifiably placed much of the blame for their humiliation on the American Government who provided so much of the modern weaponry and technical training. Many vituperative statements against the United States were made by the media in Iraq as in other Arab states.

The American Embassy personnel, perhaps a little jittery recalling the '58 coup in which four Americans died, gathered together most American residents, probably about 800, and left Baghdad for Teheran in a convoy of cars and trucks about 3:00 a.m. on June 9th, while the war was still going on. Six days later, as if to put the best face on the American exodus, the Iraqi Government issued a decree ordering all Americans expelled. It is interesting to speculate on the direction the Government of Iraq might have taken if the Americans had not fled.

The Jesuits continued to operate their two schools but many of the ambitious plans mentioned earlier had to be abandoned and for the following year the Jesuits kept a low profile. The number of applicants for Baghdad College, however, increased rather than decreased, indicating that the people saw no incongruity in these American Jesuits continuing to run schools in Iraq.

About this time a concern over spies arose due in part to an elaborate plot which resulted in Israel receiving an Iraqi MIG-21, thereby embarrassing Iraq in the eyes of Russia. A more telling reason for this concern, however, were the activities of *Kol Israel*, "The Voice of Israel", a daily radio broadcast beamed to Iraq in Arabic and heard by many Iraqis.

Each night Iraqis would hear their government ridiculed. Scattered among the news items were many taunts directed at Iraqi Government officials indicating an elaborate spy operation in Iraq. "We know your helicopters are along the Army canal." "We won't bomb you until you get a decent air raid warning system." This referred to Iraq's calamitous attempts at blackouts which were abandoned because they had caused considerable damage. "You should be careful about elevator capacities" referred to an attempt by the army to mount an anti-aircraft gun on top of a 20-story building at the University of Baghdad. As soon as it was placed on the elevator, the gun and the elevator plunged into the basement.

Once *Kol Israel* broadcast the answers to the government secondary school exams the night before the exams were to be



administered. How, reasoned the Iraqis, are the Israelis getting this information? The Iraqi Jews could see no humor in the *Kol Israel's* mischievous broadcasts because they became the victims of an extensive spy hunt and almost all Jewish students were denied access to the government-run University. Al-Hikma, however, admitted qualified Jewish students as long as they were Iraqi citizens, since all citizens, Muslim, Christian, or Jew, by law were entitled to education, public or private.

## **The two 1968 July Revolutions and the events that followed them**

After a relatively peaceful school year in 1967-68, things had begun to look better in the Summer of 1968 when the second decisive event took place. On July 17 a coup d'etat succeeded, bringing to power a regime considered to be moderate. Nasir Al Hani became the Foreign Minister of this new regime. He was a good friend of Fr. Richard McCarthy who had previously invited him to give the principal address at the Holy Cross Convocation in Worcester, MA. on March 20, 1967 when Fr. McCarthy received an honorary Doctorate. (Nasir was assassinated in Baghdad on November 11, 1968.)

But this new government was ousted when it was only a few weeks old on July 30 by another revolution which brought the Baath Party to power. The Baath were part of the 17 July coup, but seized control once the coup succeeded. They had been in power in 1963 for nine months, only to be overthrown in a bloody coup. The Baath Party was opposed to private education in any form - including Muslim private education. Article 45 of the Constitution of the Baath Party concerns the Party's policy on education stated: "Teaching is one of the exclusive functions of the state. Therefore, all foreign and private educational institutions are abolished." From the outset the Iraqi Government promised to "neutralize Israeli aggression and rid Iraq of spies". So the pace of the spy-hunt picked up. Meanwhile, the Teachers' Union, a small organization of secondary school teachers, attacked Al-Hikma on TV and in the press, requesting the government to get rid of vestiges of imperialism like Coca Cola, miniskirts, the Beatles and Al-Hikma, but not necessarily in that order.

It did not take the government long to act. On September 19th a special committee representing the government came to the Al-Hikma property and announced to the Dean Fr. Joseph Ryan and to the Superior of the Jesuit Mission, Fr. John Donohue, that Al-Hikma had been "Iraqized". At the time, Al-Hikma's President Fr. Mc Carthy was attending an international conference of Catholic Universities at Kinshasa in Africa.

The text of the September, 1968 decree which the committee presented follows, translated from the original Arabic.

1. In view of the fact that those in charge of the Administration of Al-Hikma University are aiming at things which are not consonant with the patriotic and national interests, and since necessity enjoins the Iraqization of this institution and giving it a sound educational orientation, the Council of the Command of the Revolution has decreed that the responsible quarters take the steps necessary for Iraqizing it and placing it under the supervision of the Government directly in all respects.
  2. Doctor Sa'ad Abdul Baqi Er-Rawi is appointed Acting President of the aforementioned University.
- (signed) The Council of the Command of the Revolution

No names were signed but this council ostensibly had the supreme power in the country. It consisted of five military men: Ahmed Hasan Al-Bakr (President of the Republic and Prime Minister), Salih Mahdi Ammash (Minister of the Interior), Hardan Al-Tikriti (Minister of Defense), Sadoon Al-Ghaidan (Commander of the Republican Guard), and another general who was the Commander of the Baghdad Garrison.

During their visit this special committee indicated that the government would administer the school, and no compensation would be given since it would still belong to the Iraq-American Educational Association (the name of the Jesuits' legal association). The only reason given for this action was that Al-Hikma had "deviated from the aims of the revolution," but no one would explain how Al-Hikma "deviated". Safes and filing cabinets were all sealed and guards were placed. The Jesuits, they said, could stay and teach if they wished, but the government would appoint a new Iraqi president and a new Dean for Al-Hikma.

The newly appointed Acting President of Al-Hikma, Dr. Saad Abdul Baqi Er-Rawi, reflecting the Baathi credo, spoke in an interview published in the weekly *Alif-Ba* (#15 October 2, 1968, pp. 3-4). Although inside the front cover of this issue was a photo of the Jesuit residence with a cartoon of an armed Uncle Sam in an academic robe pulling strings of a turbaned Arab holding a diploma, the words of the designated president, Dr. Sa'ad indicated the very opposite viewpoint. Here is a section of his remarks in translation.

Please know that Iraqization is not nationalization, because nationalization means the transfer of ownership from the private sector to the public sector. But Iraqization is a purely



administrative measure which has for its aim the placing of the institution under direct Iraqi administration and supervision. This means that Al-Hikma University will remain the property of the Iraq - American Association, and so the ownership of it will not be transferred to the Iraqi Government as the result of Iraqization.

I would like it to be understood that the intention was not to direct any accusation, especially against the religious men working in the University. The whole matter is confined to the fact of their being foreigners. Because of this they are unable to understand the stage at which our nation is living, nor can they comprehend our national problems and our struggle with imperialism and Zionism, nor are they favorable to our strivings and aspirations. Instruction is one of the most important factors which form the personality of the individual. Hence to leave it in their hands was something undesirable. (from the N. E. Province archives, file #510)

He went on to claim that more poor students would be able to attend this "rich man's school" which charged ID 120 (\$420) annual tuition. He insisted that Al-Hikma as well as the state University had been deficient in the matter of national studies but that this would be remedied.

Of course the Fathers formally protested the decree as well as the reasons given for the "Iraqization" of Al-Hikma. But they decided to try to cooperate with the new Acting President and to open the scholastic year according to schedule.

After the war of the previous year, Fr. John Donohue, anticipating problems of survival, had requested a Jesuit visitor from the Curia in Rome to help search for reasonable options in order to keep the Jesuit Mission open. One plan, for instance, was to exchange the men in the Baghdad Mission for men in another mission run by a nationality not considered hostile to Iraq. Another was to bring as many Arab Jesuits to the Baghdad Mission as possible from Lebanon, Egypt and Syria. As it turned out, the Baath Government was determined to "Iraqize" all private schools, no matter who was running them. And the government did the same to the other private schools in Iraq including Muslim private schools whether they were owned by foreigners or Iraqis just as the Syrian Baath had done in Syria.

The Jesuit Community conducted frequent meetings trying to work out the best way to live with the Baath Regime and also to determine how best to handle the harassment by hooligans sent to the campus by the National Student Union. This harassment lasted from the time of the "Iraqization" to the time of the Jesuit

departure later on. For instance, on one occasion 15 bus loads of students were brought to the campus to hold an anti-American demonstration. In the face of Jesuit objections the new Iraqi Dean re-admitted 15 students who had been dismissed the previous year for disciplinary reasons. They formed a cadre which would intimidate the other students into joining rowdy behavior meant to disrupt classes on the campus. One member of the Baath Party came to the school and attempted to get his friend registered - at gun point. During this time the atmosphere was very tense, but the Jesuits, lay faculty and students, did not suffer bodily harm, just indignities.

Fr. Crowley recounts an incident indicating how well the Al-Hikma students behaved in this stressful situation.

One day many Baghdad youth invaded the Al-Hikma campus, disrupting classes and shouting anti-Israeli and anti-American slogans. The Jewish students were especially apprehensive and most managed to escape over the back wall. A group of Al-Hikma Muslim students made themselves responsible for the remaining Jewish women. They escorted them all into the women's lounge and posted themselves guards at the doors, assuring the women that they would allow no demonstrator to bother them. "They'll have to fight us before they reach you." Fortunately the demonstrators by-passed the lounge, but the incident speaks volumes about the courage and loyalty of the Al-Hikma students. (Fr. Charles G. Crowley)

On October 10 a new "President-Delegate" of Al-Hikma had been named, Dr. Fadhil Husain Al Ansari, with a Ph.D. from Indiana University who taught history at Baghdad University. Dr. Khalil Hammash, Ph.D., from the University of Chicago was named Secretary-General of Al-Hikma. These appointments were announced over Baghdad Radio and published in the newspapers but nothing was officially communicated to the Jesuits. The Jesuits had many conversations with the new President and the Secretary-General. Two things were at the top of their agenda: the case of the student expelled for disciplinary reasons who was using every means to gain re-admission and the project of the new Al-Hikma statutes which were being prepared for the approval of the Council of Ministers. The Jesuits were excluded from any discussions in preparing these statutes.

On October 24, 1968 Fr. McCarthy addressed a letter to the members of the Revolutionary Council to assure them that the Jesuit intentions had always focused on the best interests of Iraq



and to challenge the government's takeover of the university. Here follows Fr. McCarthy's English translation from his original letter in Arabic.

To: The Esteemed Council of the Commands of the Revolution

Subject: The Situation in Al-Hikma University

Greetings and salutations: I am sending this memorandum to you in my own name and in the name of all the Jesuit Fathers working in Al-Hikma University, of whom I have the honor to be the ecclesiastical and spiritual Superior. I am doing this, because we do not wish that you should be unaware of our present situation, which is the consequence of the events related to Al-Hikma University that have transpired during the past month and a half.

1. On last Sept. 12th, the esteemed Council of the Command of the Revolution issued a Decree Iraqicizing Al-Hikma University and appointing Dr. Saad Abd al-Baqi al-Rawi as the Acting President of Al-Hikma University. This Decree took us by surprise, since it was issued without any previous knowledge on our part, and without its being preceded by any discussions between us and the authorities. Moreover, this Decree grieved us, since it ordered the Iraqization of Al-Hikma University "because those in charge of the administration of Al-Hikma University are aiming at things not consonant with the national and patriotic interests", and because "necessity requires the Iraqization of this institution and giving it a sound educational orientation". These words contain an aspersion on our personal integrity, our professional competence, and the sincerity of our intentions.

2. On Sept. 12th a Committee composed of Dr. Saad Abd al-Baqi al-Rawi and others came to Al-Hikma University to carry out the Administrative Order, DG 1950, of Sept. 12, 1968. We took advantage of the opportunity to ask for certain necessary clarifications. They informed us orally that the Decree would not affect our legal Association, and that the Government was desirous that the Fathers remain in the University and that the school year be begun as usual.

3. On the same day we indicated several points, of which the following are the most important:

a) We protested first of all against the Decree's being a complete surprise, without any previous warning or discussions - a fact which surprised us then, and which continues to amaze us. We also protested against the charge asserting that we were aiming at things not consonant with the national and patriotic interests. If such were the case, logic



would require of the Government that it should not allow the Fathers to remain in the University, but that it should expel them from the country. On the other hand, if the Government was desirous that the Fathers remain in the University, this desire would indicate that the Government did not really believe that the Fathers were aiming at things not consonant with the interests of the nation. In this case, the charge would be meaningless, and it ought to have been annulled according to the dictates of truth and respect.

b) We explained that the Fathers had always wished to work for the good of Iraq, and that they would never cease desiring that, so long as it remained possible. And we called attention to the fact that we did not come to Iraq as individuals, but as a religious group subject to our Superiors here and in Rome. Therefore, our attitude towards the Decree Iraqicizing our University would be formed in accordance with the wishes of our Superiors. And their wishes would depend on their knowledge of the conditions defining our university work, and the legal expression of these conditions, and the guarantees which would be given by the Government of Iraq. In the meantime, we would be prepared to continue the university work asked of us.

c) We requested an appointment with the President of the Republic of Iraq, and an interview with the Minister of the Interior. Our regret has increased, since we have thus far been unable to obtain the appointment or the interview, and it seems to us that the hope of doing so is very slender indeed.

d) We called the Committee's attention to the fact that the Jesuit Fathers came to Iraq in 1932, not on their own initiative, and not to found a foreign institution independent of the will of the people and the control of the Government, but simply because they had been sent by the Pope in answer to the repeated request made to the Vatican by the Iraqi Catholic Patriarch and Bishops. The fact that the Fathers were of American nationality had no special meaning other than that the need was for Fathers who knew English, and that some of the Fathers of the New England Province of the Society of Jesus were able at the time to undertake the educational work requested. And what admits no doubt whatever is that the Fathers, from the day of their coming to Iraq to this very day, have never meddled in political party or sectarian matters. Moreover they have always been supporters of just Arab causes, and in particular, they have defended, and continue to defend, the Arabs' position and rights regarding the question of Palestine. As for Al-Hikma University, we set about founding



it only after we had obtained the approval of the Ministry of Education, expressly stated in the official letter, No. 15020, dated May 5th, 1955.

e) It was inevitable that we should mention the lying statements and ugly slanders which have appeared in some of the local newspapers during the past year, and which contained disgraceful attacks and disgusting insults directed against Al-Hikma University - its Administration, Faculty, and student body. And we seize this occasion to deny completely what had been said and written against us. At the same time we place on record our astonishment at the fact that such false statements and baseless accusations were published in newspapers subject to the Government's supervision and censorship.

f) With reference to the Government's natural desire to supervise university instruction, we reminded the Committee that we had always acknowledged it in word and deed. You must be aware that we agreed to the principle of supervision more than a year ago in our meetings with representatives of the Supreme Council for Universities and in the letters which we addressed to that Council.

We put into effect in our University a number of suggestions given to us by the Council, and we have always been ready to cooperate with the Council and with responsible authorities. Hence we were surprised that the Decree Iraqicizing our University was issued without our being informed ahead of time, and without previous consultations about the matter.

g) We explained in detail the case of two students who were dismissed from our University seven months ago because of their numerous grave violations of the University, not for scholastic reasons, and not for political reasons, but solely for disciplinary reasons having to do with their unbecoming conduct, which we set forth in detail to the representatives of the Supreme Council for Universities, and to Inspectors from the Ministry of Education, and to the two Iraqi Presidents, past and present, of the University.

We declared that we could not consent to the return of the two students to the University, because their presence in the University would stand in the way of teaching, learning, order and peace, and create an atmosphere opposed to the best interests of the University and its Faculty and its male and female students. This has been confirmed by what the two students did after their dismissal, and especially by the conduct of one of them during the past five weeks. We have repeatedly urged the authorities to help these two students to continue their studies in another College, for their own good

and for the good of Al-Hikma University.

4. Since the issuing of the Decree Iraqicizing Al-Hikma University two events have taken place, each of them very important.

a) On the ninth of this month (October) one of the two students dismissed last year for disciplinary reasons came to our University. He entered the Office of the Registrar of our University, accompanied by two persons representing the National Union of Iraqi Students. The dismissed student asked the Registrar to register him as a student in Al-Hikma University. The Registrar answered him, saying (and what he said was true) that he did not have the power to admit and register students, but that this power belonged to the Presidency of the University. Thereupon one of the previously mentioned two representatives took out a revolver, cocked it, and brought it close to the Registrar's face and threatened that he would shoot him if he did not register the dismissed student. The Registrar continued to refuse. This event was witnessed by the Registrar, and his Assistant, and one of the Jesuit Fathers, who was standing near the armed representative. The revolver was seen by other persons, a few minutes later, in the office of the Secretary. This threat to a member of the University's Administration in his own Office by a representative of the National Union of Iraqi Students is an exceedingly grave matter in our opinion.

We took the matter up with the Professor who was then the Acting President of Al-Hikma University, and we asked him to take the necessary measures to prevent those threatening and armed persons from entering the University campus. Otherwise, we could not be responsible for the safety of our students, and our professors, and the members of our Administration. We also informed the Directors of the Security and the Police in Zafarania about the event and the grave threat. We are very much surprised that, judging from appearances, those measures were not taken. The three persons mentioned have returned to the University a number of times, and the dismissed student has continued to come to the University almost daily.

b) The second event is that which took place on Saturday, Oct. 19th. On Friday the 18th, the newspaper *The Voice of the Peasant* published an announcement about a celebration to be held by the National Union of Iraqi Students, in the building of the University of Al-Hikma, on the occasion of the passage of one month (actually it was 38 days) since the Iraqization of Al-Hikma University. No one had previously informed the



Acting President of Al-Hikma University about the holding of this celebration. Had it not been for our learning by chance of the previously mentioned announcement, we would have known nothing about the celebration.

On Saturday, Oct. 19th, at least 15 buses came to Al-Hikma University, some of them Baghdad University buses, and some of them double-decker public buses. In the buses were persons, some of whom were university students, and some secondary school students. Among this throng, and also actively participating in the celebration, were the three students who had played their parts in the event of the revolver, previously mentioned. It has also been said that a number of those taking part in the celebration, from outside our University, were armed. It was clear that a large number of the students of Al-Hikma University had no desire to participate in a celebration run in their University by outsiders who had not consulted them about the affair.

We believe that these points may have escaped the notice of the Member of your Council who addressed the gathering and of the Minister of Youth, who was also present. We were happy to have these two persons present, since we feel that their presence was an important factor in assuring that the progress of the celebration would not be marked by violent, and even bloody, incidents. As for the demands presented by the representative of the Student Union in his speech, and printed in the issue of *The Revolution* for October 22, I single out for special mention the second, which reads: "The restoration of our comrades who were dismissed for political reasons to their scholastic benches". Was this, I wonder, the real reason for holding the celebration? In any case, I repeat once more, with the utmost insistence and emphasis: There is no student who has been dismissed from Al-Hikma University for political reasons; whoever claims such a thing, claims what is completely and absolutely contrary to the truth. With all respect and frankness, we submit to you our opinion that it is very strange that those responsible for the celebration did not consult the academic authorities to whom the matter was of concern.

5. There is another matter which gives rise to astonishment and concern. The dismissed student, referred to above, has come back to the University several times during the past week, and he has bragged to some of our students that the Council of the Command of the Revolution will issue a decree ordering his re-admission to our University. We can only regret intensely the conduct of this student and his use of the

name of the respected Council of the Command of the Revolution to exert pressure on the authorities in our University, in order to obtain something which he in no way deserves.

On Wednesday, Oct. 23rd, this student showed one of our students a paper, claiming that it was a copy of a draft decree which the Council of the Command of the Revolution was intending to pass.

The Fathers have explained to the Acting President of Al-Hikma University that the returning of this student to Al-Hikma University would render their position very difficult, and that, consequently, they could not see how they would be able to continue their work in Al-Hikma University.

6. In view of all that has happened in and concerning Al-Hikma University since the issuing of the Decree Iraqicizing our University, and inasmuch as we have been unable to contact the highest authorities, we have been forced to reconsider our position and attitude. We were, and still are, desirous of continuing our work in Al-Hikma University, a work with no other goal than that of serving Iraq and its sons.

But the events mentioned, and our present circumstances, have led us to doubt that the Government of Iraq firmly wishes that the Jesuit Fathers remain in Al-Hikma University. We have not noted, on the part of the Government, any positive sign indicating such a wish, but all the signs have, up to now, been negative. The difficulties which we are experiencing disturb us profoundly. And in the light of the events mentioned, we do not believe that the Administration of the University, so long as the present state of things continues, will be able to maintain order and to keep up the scholastic level which must exist in any university worthy of the name.

In conclusion, I assure you that the Fathers wish this noble country nothing but good. If I have spoken to you frankly, it was because of my belief that you would welcome the honest expression of the views of men of religion and learning who have consecrated their lives to carrying on the lofty mission of education. We respect you, as we respect all sincere citizens. And we respect ourselves and our profession - and this is the right and duty of every man.

Yes, we love this country and its people, and we appreciate what we have encountered here of kindness, friendship, and hospitality, which we shall never forget. We ask God Most High to bless our dear Iraq and its dear sons with the best of His favors and blessings in this world and the next. He is the One Who hears and answers.

Please accept my sincere thanks and genuine respect.



Sincerely yours,

Rev. Richard J. McCarthy, S.J.

Superior of the Jesuit Fathers in Al-Hikma University

Copy to each member of the Revolutionary Council

## November 25, 1968 dismissal of Al-Hikma Jesuits

On Saturday the expelled student mentioned previously started attending classes again. So on the following Monday, October 28 the Jesuits after careful planning and intense discussion, decided to stop teaching and administering until the Iraqi Government and Al-Hikma's Acting President could give them some assurance that order would be restored sufficiently so that the academic year could continue. They went "on strike" in their own school. The Jesuit statement follows.

Notice To: The Faculty of Al-Hikma University

The Students of Al-Hikma University and their parents

Those working in the Administration

From this day (Monday, October 28, 1968), and until further notice, the Jesuit Fathers are discontinuing their administrative and teaching work in Al-Hikma University, until they can consult the highest authorities and arrive at a just solution of certain problems which are obstructing the normal university life consonant with the best interests of Al-Hikma University and the safety of its students.

(signed)

The Jesuit Fathers of Al-Hikma University.

Their notice was posted around the school and was later torn down by members of the Student Union. The Jesuits resumed their work in the University after they had been assured that the problem student would cause no more trouble because he had been officially transferred to a government institution of higher learning.

On October 30 the security police of the government came to the school with the names of "nine" Jesuits (actually eight since Fr. Kelly's name had two versions) who were to be expelled from the country. They were Frs. R. McCarthy, Kelly Frederick William, Frederick William Kelly, Banks, Cote, MacWade, McLeod, J. Larkin and Nash. No reason was given for the selection of these men.

This action was protested vigorously. The safety and well-being of the students was a serious Jesuit concern. On November 1, Fr. Joseph L. Ryan, S.J., the Academic Vice-President presented the following letter to Dr. Fadhil Husain al-Ansari, President Delegate of Al-Hikma University:



Dear Dr. Fadhil:

A member of the preparatory committee of the Student Union came to the Al-Hikma campus on 9 October, 1968, and in the office of the university registrar pulled out a gun, held it up to the head of the registrar and threatened to shoot him if he did not register a student who had previously been dismissed for academic reasons. The mere carrying of arms has been forbidden by the civil authorities under severe penalties. We wish to insist as strongly as possible that neither of these two men should come to the campus of Al-Hikma University again. We realize that you want the University to operate as smoothly as possible. Therefore, you must share our deep concern over the recent letter from the Residence Bureau notifying you that nine Fathers are to terminate their residence in Iraq. How can a professor, and especially a Dean, operate efficiently if he expects that he may be sent out of the country in two weeks' time? If you expect our cooperation, then you must be ready to assure the psychological well-being of the faculty. It should, of course, be clear to you that if these Fathers were to leave, we could not continue our cooperation as a group.

Therefore, this matter should be investigated and cleared up as soon as possible. We should like some clarification about the reasons for the action of the Residence Bureau or at least an assurance that the residence of these nine Fathers is definitely restored and no longer in doubt.

We feel that unless these requests are met we cannot be sure of the safety of the students on campus. Since parents send their sons and daughters here because of their confidence in us we feel that we must tell them when the campus is not safe and allow the parents to act accordingly. We insist on this point because we have the responsibility in this matter which we cannot pass off to any one else.

We feel that it is your responsibility, as president, to call to the attention of higher authorities the state of affairs which has existed on the campus recently and to outline strongly and courteously the conditions which are necessary for the proper operation of the University.

We are confident that higher authorities who are responsible for the Student Union will not accept that members of the Union be allowed to bring shame on the Union by threatening to shoot a member of the University staff who is carrying out his duties in his own office.

We are confident that higher authorities responsible for higher education are gravely concerned for the good order and

discipline in their institutions, and for the respect and dignity of the faculty and staff.

In view of all this, we feel that our attitude is a reasonable one and that we can expect the full cooperation of all responsible persons. In frankness, we should add that if the necessary conditions cannot be provided, then we must reserve the right to take whatever action we deem appropriate. It would be a shame to have the school year further interrupted because of non-academic problems which could easily be prevented.

Sincerely yours,  
(Rev.) Joseph L. Ryan, S.J.

The next few weeks were spent in furious activity. Fr. Donohue requested and received a hearing on November 20 with the President of the country, Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr, and presented a request that the order be rescinded for lack of charges. At the meeting Fr. Donohue together with Fr. McCarthy pointed out that President Bakr had earlier stated that he wanted the Jesuits to stay and work in the university. They insisted that the Jesuits had no other desire than to serve this country as they had done for 36 years, but their protestations of the innocence and of the innocent intentions of the Jesuits were to no avail. They left a written statement of their position with President Bakr.

Mr. President, I would like to assure Your Excellency that we, the Jesuit Fathers, desire most sincerely to serve this beloved country in the future as we have tried to do ever since we came to Iraq 36 years ago. We shall always be ready to cooperate with the authorities in carrying out the educational mission entrusted to us by our Superiors in the Vatican in response to what had been requested by the Iraqi Christian hierarchy and approved of by the chief Muslim authorities.

(signed) Rev. John J. Donohue, S.J.,  
Superior of the Jesuits in Iraq  
Rev. Richard J. McCarthy, S.J.,  
President of Al-Hikma University

The President replied that his hands were tied because the whole matter was the affair of the Minister of Interior General 'Ammash who was responsible for the security of the country. General 'Ammash had given the expulsion order but was now out of the country. Some of the educators at the Government University tried to intervene, but to no avail. All possible efforts were made to get the order of expulsion rescinded but these were in vain since no one was able to obtain an appointment with the Minister of the

Interior. After much discussion and deliberation, and after weighing all the possible consequences, the Jesuit Community presented the following memorandum to Dr. Fadhil Husain al-Ansari, President Delegate of Al-Hikma University, on the morning of November 21. It once again stated that the Jesuits would not work in an environment that they considered dangerous for their students and so disruptive that learning was impossible.

MEMORANDUM: To: Dr. Fadhil Hussein Al-Ansari  
President-Delegate of Al-Hikma University  
11/21/68

Dear Doctor Fadhil:

The day-to-day operation of Al-Hikma University has depended on the Jesuit staff. They have worked very hard and very conscientiously at their jobs, in spite of the mounting difficulties they have encountered during the past two months. Now, however, the order commanding the expulsion of eight Jesuit Fathers from Iraq, among them two Deans, renders it practically impossible for the Jesuit Fathers to assure the efficient functioning of Al-Hikma University. Therefore, we are compelled, with much regret, to suspend our academic work in Al-Hikma University until some reasonable and acceptable solution can be found, not only to this problem, but also to the other major unresolved problems.

We have tried unsuccessfully to find a solution. But the real responsibility for finding a solution rests primarily and *ex officio* on you, as the President of Al-Hikma University. If you can find a solution, we shall be happy to discuss with you the conditions under which we shall be able to resume our work in the University.

We think that by this time you understand our position. We are a group dedicated to educational work, and we have no political ties. The expulsion of eight Jesuit Fathers for undisclosed reasons places all of us Jesuits in jeopardy and immediately creates an intolerable climate of doubt, suspicion, and anxiety, which makes it psychologically impossible to do efficient and fruitful academic work. We know that no serious charges can be proved against the eight Jesuit Fathers who have been ordered to leave Iraq. Hence we have no assurance that the remaining Fathers will not be expelled next week, or next month. This uncertainty and this fear of arbitrary and unjust expulsion are major and insurmountable deterrents to worthwhile educational work.

We have consistently expressed by word, and proven by action, our sincere desire to cooperate with the responsible





authorities and to render service to this country and its young men and women. Yesterday the President of the Republic of Iraq told Fathers Donohue and McCarthy that he desired and welcomed our cooperation.

On our part we can do no more. We respectfully submit that it is now up to you, as President of Al-Hikma University, and to the higher quarters concerned, to take those measures which will make it possible for us to cooperate with you in the noble work of higher education.

Very sincerely yours,  
The Jesuit Fathers of Al-Hikma University

This memorandum produced an immediate reaction. On the campus neither the faculty nor the students went to class, out of solidarity with the Fathers. It was, after all unusual for the Jesuit Fathers to go on strike in their own school, but they had no other option. On the other hand the Minister of the Interior (previously unavailable) was contacted by phone within a quarter of an hour. Dr. Fadhil explained the situation to him. It was reported that the Minister became angry and forthwith ordered the expulsion of all the Al-Hikma Jesuits from Iraq. Within a half-hour the Director of the Residence Department came in person to the University. Those not already under order of expulsion were informed that they too would have to leave the country by November 25. The Papal Nuncio and the Belgian Ambassador, representing the U.S. interests, tried to make representations, but their efforts were unavailing.

A list of the names of the Al-Hikma Jesuits was sent to the Jesuit Community with orders for all Jesuits to leave the country. It is curious that the lay volunteers were never mentioned then or after. The Baghdad College Jesuits, 15 miles away, were not mentioned in the expulsion order except for Fr. MacDonnell who taught in both schools. When Fr. Donohue pointed this out to the government officials he was allowed to stay and teach at Baghdad College for the coming year. Fr. Donohue found his own name on the dismissal list but insisted that it be taken off since he was the Superior of the Jesuits in Iraq. Dr. Fadhil removed his name and he remained in Iraq.

A hurried inventory was made by the Jesuits of their equipment, furniture, books and other belongings in all five University buildings. This was signed by the newly appointed Iraqi President of Al-Hikma University, Dr. Fadhil Husain Al Ansari, in the presence of the Apostolic Nuncio, to make clear that the property, books, equipment and furnishings were being taken from the Jesuits against their will. No recompense of any kind

was ever given for the buildings which they built, the equipment which they bought or whatever personal belongings which they could not take with them and had to leave behind.

The day of departure was November 25th. There were 23 Jesuit leaving that day and 5 had already departed. The Al-Hikma students had been warned by the Student Union that any student who went to the airport to see the Fathers off would be physically harmed. In spite of this threat about one third of the student body did come and some were physically harmed afterwards. The scene in the air terminal from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. was like a wake, in spite of the large number of people there. One of the students gave a speech to the Fathers expressing the gratitude of the student body and their sorrow at the turn of events. Lufthansa held up a plane for 20 minutes to give the students and teachers time to bid each of the Fathers farewell.

Thus the 28 Jesuits, 2 other religious and 6 foreign lay volunteers left Al-Hikma and Iraq.

In January 1969, Fr. Donohue wrote from Baghdad to the "Al-Hikma Jesuit exiles".

No matter what happens, we will all have the consolation of having tried our utmost to cooperate with a difficult situation in order to continue our service here. On the Wednesday after you left, Dr. Fadhil sent me a letter thanking the Jesuits for the outstanding educational work they had done for the sons and daughters of the Iraqi people. That was very gratifying to know. Christmas was pleasant enough. People visited us as usual and everywhere I visited the conversation was on Al-Hikma. None of the Christians can put it out of their minds. Of course, many hope that somehow you could all come back. But I think there is very little foundation for their hopes. I think that the Jesuit Al-Hikma they knew is now consigned to its own *Camelot*. By the way, the ending of *Camelot* is hauntingly appropriate:

*Each evening from December to December  
Before you drift to sleep upon your cot  
Think back on all the tales that you remember of Camelot.  
Ask every person if he's heard the story  
and tell it strong and clear, if he has not,  
That once there was a fleeting wisp of glory, called Camelot.*

There are many people here telling the Al-Hikma story "strong and clear". It seems that many regard me as the remnant of Al-Hikma and when I was down there after your departure, working on the inventory, many would come running up to talk and to inform me that I was a symbol of what had been. At first



they were hoping that all the Jesuits were standing on the border of Lebanon, waiting for a signal to return. Now they take a more realistic view. (Fr. Donohue)



*Last picture of the Al-Hikma Jesuit Community taken 11/22/68*

## '68-'69 school year at Baghdad College

The Jesuits at Baghdad College were subjected to attacks in the press similar to those of Al-Hikma, with about the same absence of subtlety. As is evident in the following quotation, the accusations reflect an understandable frustration with the American Government's uneven policies toward the Arab countries and in lieu of American politicians the American Jesuits were singled out. They were after all the only Americans left in Iraq and they were very visible. A few years previously there were almost a thousand Americans.

Translation from THAWRA 12/21/68

Al-Hikma University and its sister institution, Baghdad College continued to be institutions of cultural imperialistic radiation that reflected imperialistic notions. They also continued to be spying networks working for the C.I.A. and Israel. Now that the Revolution has accomplished much through revolutionary constructiveness and alert destructiveness, Baghdad College still stands in the way of the immortal revolution as a stumbling block and an imperialistic foothold in which minds that try to thwart the course of this revolution and call for the return of imperialism have made



nests for themselves. It is your duty to carry the shovels of destruction to shatter the foothold of cultural imperialism represented by Baghdad College.

The Jesuit Fathers' involvement in politics ranged from minimal to non-existent as is illustrated in the story of Fr. Guay's introduction to Nouri es Said at a party in the early days of Baghdad College. Nouri es Said, of course served as Iraqi Prime Minister in many governments over many years. "And what do you do for a living?" asked Fr. Guay. "I work for the government" replied Nouri es Said. In January of 1969 Fr. Belcher had a similar encounter.

I was the Minister of Baghdad College. I had to bring the widow and children of one of our cooks who died of tuberculosis to the hospital for precautionary x-rays. As I was sitting in the Doctor's office, three men came in, two of whom I recognized. One was a Palestinian psychologist and the other a Baghdad College graduate who was a prominent neurologist. The third man I failed to recognize but this third man was the center of attention. He looked at me and asked the doctor who I was. The doctor identified me as a Jesuit from Baghdad College. The man asked if I were American and I said I was. He then told me that all teachers at Baghdad College would be Iraqis next year because all Jesuits would be traveling like the Jesuits from Al-Hikma. At this the three went out to another room and then I asked the Doctor who the man was. I was told that this was Salah Mehdi Ammash, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior who expelled the Jesuits from Al-Hikma University. From then on I knew our time was short lived. (Fr. Belcher)

### September 30, 1969

The 28 Jesuits were expelled from Al-Hikma on November 25, 1968. It was not until August 24, 1969, nine months later, that the 33 Jesuits of Baghdad College were dismissed. The Minister of Education sent his gratitude to the Baghdad College Jesuits saying, "Baghdad College has rendered outstanding service to the youth of Iraq for forty years." As in the case of Al-Hikma, very little publicity was given. Some thought that the two schools were closed at different times to minimize adverse publicity for the regime.

An article appeared shortly after the dismissal in the *Jesuit Mission Magazine*, written by the editor, Winter 1969, pp.. 7-8. This is an abbreviated version of the original article.



## Baghdad Diary -- Last Entries

In late August 1969 the Iraq Government summarily took possession of Baghdad College giving the Jesuits no explanation. The 33 Fathers were ordered to leave Iraq within three days. This followed, by nine months, the expropriation of Al-Hikma University and the expulsion of the 28 Jesuits there. The following are excerpts from the record of the final days of the Baghdad Mission.

August 18--Fr. Yusuf Seferta, S.J., the Iraqi Principal of the school, was formally summoned to the Intelligence Bureau for questioning by an assistant officer. The atmosphere was quite cordial. The basic question was: "Why can't Iraqi teachers be substituted for the American Jesuit Fathers?" Before the questioning began the interviewer told Fr. Seferta, "Baghdad College is an excellent school; but the government intends to Iraqiize it."

August 24--Seven security officers and police officers came to the Jesuit residence to inform the Rector, Fr. Carty, that they had been sent by order of the Minister of the Interior to seal the school buildings and to take the keys. When Fr. Carty asked for an official paper or documents, they refused and merely reiterated that they were an official committee sent to close the school. After the departure of the officers, we immediately notified the Papal Nuncio, the Chaldean Patriarch and the Belgian Ambassador (who represented U.S. interests) about what had happened. The next day all three went separately to the Ministry of Interior, but in vain.



*One of the last photographs taken of the Baghdad Jesuit Community*

August 25--An officer from the Residence Department came with an order from the Director General of Nationality which stated that all the American Jesuits were to leave the country within three days. The following day both the Belgian Ambassador and the Papal Nuncio visited the Foreign Office to protest against this sudden forced exodus.

August 27--The extension request was approved, which means the American Fathers can remain in Iraq until about the 7th of September. The Chaldean Patriarch, visited the Assistant Minister of Interior (the Minister is in the North) to ask for an explanation of the closure of the school and the expulsion of the American Jesuits. When His Beatitude asked about the status of the two Iraqi Jesuits, Fr. Seferta, Principal of the School and Fr. Burby, Assistant Principal, the Assistant Minister expressed surprise. He was not aware of any Iraqi Jesuits. When the Patriarch inquired about the disposition of the Fathers' property and the possibility of turning it over to another all Iraqi Christian Association, the Acting Minister said this would not be possible. There has been absolutely no mention of any of this in the news media.

August 30--Fr. Seferta had an appointment with the Minister of Education. The Minister, who seemed quite embarrassed, knew nothing about the closing of the school and the forced exodus of the American Fathers. Fr. Seferta submitted two requests: that he and Fr. Burby be allowed to remain as Principal and Assistant Principal of Baghdad College and that they be allowed to keep the piece of land on which is located the Fathers' residence, the church and the cemetery.

August 31--One of the local newspapers carried an article announcing that a committee would be formed to replace the foreign administration of Baghdad College. In every other aspect the school would remain the same.

September 1--During the first week of September most of the American Jesuits left Iraq while two Jesuits of the Near East Vice Province arrived to help out. The school is still sealed.

September 3--His Beatitude, the Chaldean Patriarch, and Fr. Yusuf Seferta had a meeting with the Minister of Education. The Minister mentioned he had visited both the President of the Republic and the Director General of Security to complain about the seizure of Baghdad College. He added that he was doing everything possible to help us, but because of the American policy of supporting Israel that this was not so easy. When the Patriarch brought up the possibility of some of the older



Fathers remaining in the country, the Minister seemed quite enthusiastic.

We have learned from reliable sources that a group of Iraqi educators well-disposed toward the Jesuit Fathers and aware of the high level of education given at Baghdad College are requesting that it be made a "model" school under the supervision of the College of Education. They are also making efforts to have Fr. Powers and Fr. Carty remain on for some time to assist in the transition.

September 4--A letter sent from the Ministry of Interior to the Mutasarrafiya (governor's office) states: 1) that the Fathers' legal association had been dissolved; 2) that the property would be disposed of by the government, and 3) that a committee had been formed to take over the school.

The Papal Nuncio arranged with the Acting Minister of Interior that: 1) Fr. Powers and Fr. Carty would be given an extension of residence; 2) it is very probable the Jesuit residence, the church and the cemetery would be left in the hands of the Fathers; 3) the possibility of the Iraqi Jesuits, participating in the school administration would have to be discussed further. Later in the morning an officer from the Residence Department came to get the passports of Fathers Powers and Carty.

September 9--An official committee appointed by the Minister of Education came to open the school. The committee is composed of five professional educators. The head of the committee. Dr. Suad [el-Bustani], Director of the Educational Research Center, explained that their work is merely to supervise the running of the school - and that they want the school to continue as it was in the past. Fr. Seferta will continue as the Principal and Fr. Burby as his assistant. To replace the American Jesuit Fathers, Dr. Suad plans to bring teachers from Baghdad University to teach the sciences and mathematics in English. She is most anxious that the Christian students continue to receive religious instruction.

Fr. Powers and Fr. Carty have received an extension of residence to the end of this month. It seems doubtful that they will be allowed to remain beyond this date, but in the Orient one never knows.

September 29--Situation still unclear. Fr. Powers and Fr. Carty leave tomorrow. We have decided that Fathers Seferta and Burby will not continue in the school administration.

The diary ends as did the work of 143 American Jesuits.

## Reasons for the dismissal

No explanation was ever given by the Iraqi Government for the expulsion of the Jesuits. They were simply told they had to be out of the country in five days. We can only surmise, then, what the real causes for dismissals were. One cause could be a popular nationalistic spirit, or an anti-American spirit. There certainly were nationalistic enthusiasm as well as signs of justified resentment toward American pro-Israel policy, but there were also signs of friendship toward the few Americans still living in Iraq. In fact, Americans, as Americans, seemed liked in the Arab world.

Finally another reason suggested was an anti-Christian sentiment; but there was no evidence that the expulsion was directed against Christians and there was no reason to believe that the government had any quarrel with the Jesuits either as Jesuits or as Christians. Religious preference was not a high priority for the Iraqi Government at that time. Whatever the rationale for the dismissal it was carried out with no physical harm to the Jesuits, indeed they were treated with respect and courtesy at several different levels of government.

Perhaps the best explanation for the dismissal can be found in the Baath ideology which is opposed to private and especially foreign-run schools. In Syria, for example, the Syrian Baath Government took over all Catholic schools in 1967. In fact, after the Jesuits left Iraq, other Iraqi private schools, Muslim as well as Christian, were taken over by the Iraqi Baath Government. Some members of the Baath Party were more serious than others about implementing this policy of opposition to private education.

These members used two small but vocal groups to influence government officials who were reluctant to dismiss the Jesuits, but who felt themselves in too precarious a state to withstand concerted opposition. These two groups were the National Student Union and the Teachers' Union, mentioned earlier.

In any case it is safe to say that the actions of the National Student Union and the Teachers' Union, coupled with a small but powerful clique within the party itself go a long way to explain the seizure of the Jesuit institutions and the expulsion of the Jesuits. If most educated Iraqis had their say, Al-Hikma and Baghdad College would have gone on under the direction of the Jesuits.

Wael Hindo had his own theory on the Iraqization of Baghdad College and Al-Hikma.

The revolutionary command council that issued the order of



Iraqization of Baghdad College and Al-Hikma was run by young men just graduated or about to graduate from College. Their ages ranged between 24 to 29 years old, and it is these young men who were the driving force of the revolution. They were mostly members of the Iraqi Student Union, labor unions, teachers' union, and other minor unions. These young people lacked the political maturity and the experience to govern. Compounded to these difficulties of inexperience, the openly anti-Arab policies of the United States in the Middle East, after 1967, were factors in the Iraqization of Al-Hikma, and the expulsion of the Jesuits.

(Waiel Hindo, B.C. '68, A.H. '64)

In a January 3, 1969 letter from Boston, Fr. McCarthy commented on possible reasons for the dismissal of the Al-Hikma Jesuits, not being certain at the time of writing that Baghdad College would also be closed. From that perspective while Al-Hikma was in its last academic year ('68-'69) and without any Jesuits teaching there, his words are rather poignant.

The full story of the events leading to our final expulsion is very involved and complicated. Why did it all happen? The principal factors involved were:

a) The Baath Party is in control of Iraq and its Government. One of the declared tenets of this Party is that education, on all levels, must be entirely in the hands of the State. Therefore, the Baath Party in Iraq can be expected to get rid of private educational institutions systematically (as the Syrian wing of the Party has done in Syria).

b) Certain members of the revived Student Union in Iraq were very antagonistic to the presence of the Jesuit Fathers, and that for a variety of motives.

c) There was a good deal of anti-American feeling as a result of the humiliating military defeat of the Arabs in June, 1967, and the support given to Israel by many American quarters. This feeling was exploited by those hostile to our presence for different reasons. There was also the fact that Al-Hikma had, and has, a relatively large number of Jewish students, all of them Iraqi citizens.

d) Certain students who had been expelled or dropped from Al-Hikma for scholastic or disciplinary reasons were naturally disgruntled and were able to exercise a certain pressure on some members of the Government through the Student Union and through slanderous articles published in some Baghdad newspapers and magazines. Such articles could not be



answered publicly, and they undoubtedly helped to create a false impression of Al-Hikma in the minds of many.

There were doubtless other factors, personal and political. We shall probably never really know the whole story. As against those factors, it is worth mentioning that many Iraqis, in all walks of life, held us, and continue to hold us in high regard. The Iraqization of Al-Hikma University was not a "popular" measure in the best educated and academic circles.

(Fr. Richard McCarthy)

## **The Baghdad Jesuit diaspora: where did they go?**

What do 60 men do after being shut out of their apostolate after many years of experience and specialized training, leaving the apostolate behind them. The Baghdad Jesuits held meetings after their dismissal trying to answer this question. They felt that they had worked well as a team; also that they had developed certain skills, corporate and individual, which might be needed in some part of the Arab world. None of the places suggested, however, proved feasible.

A meeting held December 17, 1968 was one of a series trying to discover how best to use these skills. Some are listed here and indicate imaginative and inventive alternatives to abandoning their favorite apostolate - working in the Arab world. The ideas included attempts to return to Baghdad to work at Baghdad College or in the Chaldean seminary or with other religious orders; to work in some other Arab country; to start a research institute in Beirut connected with the Jesuit St. Joseph University; to do Newman Club and chaplain work at the American University of Beirut; to teach at A.U.B.; to become involved in Lebanon's secondary education; to help in schools of other Middle Eastern religious orders; to teach in the Jesuit College de la Sainte Famille in Cairo with 1200 students; to work in the student center in Cairo; to teach in the American University of Cairo; to work in Fr. Sullivan's Teachers' program in Saudi Arabia; to move on to other countries such as Indonesia.

Many of the Baghdad Jesuits did some of the above but most were then absorbed into the works of the New England Province. Fifteen remained in the Middle East; five in Egypt, ten in Lebanon, and one in Indonesia. Four were doing scholarly work at St. Joseph's University in Beirut at CEMAM, the Center for the Study of the Modern Arab World. CEMAM has already published a bibliography *Arab Culture and Society in Change*. Fr. Ryan, former Dean of Al-Hikma worked at CEMAM in Beirut. Later he conducted lecture tours in which he spoke on the Arab-Israeli conflict, Jerusalem and the role of the U.S. in the Middle East.

Some went to work in Egypt, one of whom was Fr. Carty.

After leaving Iraq in April, 1970, I joined the Jesuit community at the Holy Family Secondary School in Cairo, Egypt. There, using experience acquired at Baghdad College, I helped set up a new language lab and a new English program and taught English there. Then in July 1978 I was appointed to the Jesuit Residence in Alexandria, Egypt, where, in addition to administrative duties (Superior, Minister, Treasurer), I directed the University Students Library. In 1985, I was sent to the Jesuit Residence in Minia, Egypt, a small town 240 km south of Cairo to teach English to adults. I also assisted in the formation of the young Jesuits in the novitiate and am now coordinating the English teaching program at the Jesuit secondary school in Cairo. (Fr. Carty)

Perhaps this narrative of the last few years of the mission in Iraq might offer some idea of what was lost and the events that led up to the dismissal of the Jesuits. The greatest loss, of course, was not in terms of property, but in terms of human relations and opportunities for Jesuits to work with Iraqis, Oriental Christians and Muslims. The real reasons are hidden in the mystery of Divine Providence: why such a work that was so promising be suddenly struck down. In any case, this "fleeting wisp of glory" did exist for 37 years and who can predict what significance it might have for any future service to the Baghdad community by Jesuits and their colleagues and what it could mean for better dialogue between Muslims and Christians in the future?

### **Jesuit - lay volunteer reunion**

In August of 1974 to commemorate five years after the sudden expulsion of the Jesuits and their colleagues from Baghdad a reunion was held at Fairfield University with 23 Jesuits and 37 lay volunteers present. Since their expulsion all had done many interesting and exciting things, but the topic that no one could forget was their experience in Baghdad.



*Fr. Merrick at the picnic*



*Older and wiser lay volunteers*



*Realizing that the B.C. students would win the annual baseball game*

## **The Jesuit cemetery, residence and B.C. today**

Today, the buildings at Al-Hikma are used by the Iraqi Government as a technical institute, part of the University of Baghdad. The equipment and the library were given to the University of Baghdad. Baghdad College was originally intended to be made a local neighborhood school, but a committee from the University of Baghdad was formed and it convinced the government to keep the school running as a model college preparatory school. The University of Baghdad thus would supply the teachers so that the standards of the school would be maintained. Baghdad College is still operating under this arrangement. After the American Jesuits left in 1969, two Iraqi Jesuits stayed in the residence and taught religion at Baghdad College. They chose to leave the following year, 1970.

Five Jesuits were buried in the Jesuit cemetery and their average age when they died was less than a youthful 45. We still remember them as young men, especially the oldest



chronologically, Fr. Madaras, who enlivened every gathering with his wit and youthful joy of life. The men were, according to date of birth, entrance into the Society of Jesus, death and age at the time of death:

Francis Cronin	1912	1932	1/30/53	@ 41
Roger O'Callaghan	1912	1929	3/5/54	@ 42
Thomas Manning	1932	1952	6/21/60	@ 28
John Owens	1924	1941	5/19/67	@ 43
Edward Madaras	1897	1916	10/2/67	@ 70



*The five Jesuit gravestones near the chapel at Baghdad College*

One of the major Baghdad College buildings was named to honor Fr. Cronin who was a well loved teacher. In January of 1953 he developed a rash which puzzled the Baghdad doctor so he was brought to the British air base at Habbaniyah where he was found to have leukemia. He died on January 30, 1953 at the air base and was buried behind the Baghdad College church in Sulaikh, the first Jesuit to die on the mission.

Fr. O'Callahan was a scholar of Sacred Scripture and was visiting the archeological sites of Iraq when he was killed in an automobile accident. Fr. Fennell remembers him.

During the winter of 1954, the Fathers had a visitor, a Jesuit scholar of the New York Province. Fr. O'Callaghan was reputed to know a dozen languages, most of the common European tongues, and a few languages known only to students of ancient peoples. In spite of his brilliance and reputation, he never could learn how to play well the simple card game of "pitch", a popular game during the Fathers' evening recreation.

On the evening of March 5, 1954, while returning with some scientists from a day of exploration of some ancient diggings,

he was sitting on the front passenger side of the car. In the dark, they ran into a truck, parked in the road with no headlights on. The truck's tailboard smashed the windshield and hit Fr. O'Callaghan's brow. Death must have been instantaneous. Fr. Fennell and another Father had to identify the body at the morgue the next morning. Fr. O'Callaghan was the second Jesuit to be buried in the cemetery behind our church in Sulaikh. (Fr. Fennell)



*Rev. Thomas Manning, S.J.*



*The Manning funeral 6/22/60*

The youngest to die there was Fr. Manning who died of hepatitis. He was one of the most popular members of the Jesuit community and his death was particularly difficult for the Jesuits, partly because it came so quickly. Fr. Owens died of cancer after a prolonged illness during which he gave considerable edification and encouragement to both students and his fellow Jesuits. The Jesuit last to die was one of the co-founders, Fr. Madaras about which much has already been written. He showed himself a genius with many talents and a heroic figure in the community, larger than life.



*Funeral of Edward Madaras, S.J. 10/3/67*

The church, the Jesuit graveyard, the Jesuit residence and the former boarding school were entrusted to the Chaldean Patriarch. For a while the Patriarch used the old boarding school as an orphanage. The sequence of events leading to this is as follows. After the Baghdad College Jesuits were ordered to leave the country, Fr. Powers and Fr. Carty were allowed to stay for a few weeks to take care of details. The disposition of the property was followed carefully by the Belgian Ambassador who was taking care of American interests. His information was sent to the New England Jesuit Provincial in Boston by way of the U.S. Embassy in Brussels.

Different rumors are being circulated about future operation of the school, to the effect that the school may be run by the Ministry of Education or by the Iraqi Jesuit Fathers. However, the newspaper *Al-Nur* in its issue of September 4, carried a statement by an official of the Ministry of the Interior who declared that a committee has been formed to run the school and that students should call within a week for new instructions. The Ministry spokesman added that the college will maintain the same academic standards. The Belgian Embassy believes the Iraqi government will take possession of the school property. The Belgian Embassy is keeping in touch with the Apostolic Delegate Msgr. Perrin and Father Carty on this matter and will keep us informed of developments.

"Mr. Taha al-Qaissy, Director General of Cultural Affairs at the Ministry of Education, declared to *Al-Nur* yesterday that a committee shall be formed to administer Baghdad college in place of the present foreign administration. Mr. Al-Qaissy confirmed that studies shall continue in the said Collège as before and at the same standards and system and all that will be changed is the foreign administration. (USINT comment: Baghdad College is a high school run by American Jesuit Fathers.) *Al-Nur*, August 31, 1969" (Letter to Fr. Guindon from John Eisenhower of the U.S. Embassy in Brussels)

The Iraqi Government had sealed the buildings and originally had intended to take over all the buildings and all the property. Fr. Carty pointed out that part of the property had a cemetery, a church and a religious house. Eventually this question was confronted and again the Belgian Ambassador reported the latest news to his embassy which was then sent to the Jesuit superior in Boston.

Brussels A-698 of December 3, 1969 reported the likelihood that the church, cemetery and residence properties of Baghdad College would be turned over to the Latin Catholic Community



in Iraq. This would have put these properties at the disposal of the Arab Jesuit Fathers who continue to teach religion in the College. Indeed, according to information received by the Belgian Embassy, a definite decision has been taken by the Minister of the Interior, General Ammash, to transfer these properties to the Latin Catholic Episcopate. The registration procedure was following its normal course and the Papal Pro-Nuncio, who is also Bishop of the Latin Church, had received an official request for documents needed for the registration.

It therefore came as a surprise to both the Belgian Embassy and the Papal Pro-Nuncio when the semi-official newspaper *Al-Jumhuriyeh* in its issue of January 12 published a decision of the Revolutionary Command Council giving the church, cemetery and residence to the Roman Catholic Chaldean Patriarchate. A translation of the *Al-Jumhuriyeh* announcement is enclosed. It will be noted that the boarding house of the college, which had not been a part of the earlier decision of the Minister of the Interior, is donated to the Chaldean Daughters of Mary. (Letter to Fr. Guindon from John Eisenhower of the U.S. Embassy in Brussels)

The New England Provincial, Fr. Guindon, decided that the Jesuits should not be communicating with the Chaldean Patriarch through the Belgian Ambassador. He then consulted with officials in Rome and requested them to communicate to the Chaldean Patriarch the Jesuits' gratitude for his willingness to care for this property of the Jesuits and of the Latin Christian Community. This message was received, its meaning was understood and both were acknowledged by the Chaldean Patriarch.

As far as any recompense for the property little effort was made lest the Christian Community be harmed in retaliation. Fr. McCarthy did ask the Gulbenkian foundation for their opinion on the matter, however, and received the following reply.

Fundacao Calousle Gulbenkian

Servico do Medio Oriente Lisboa ME.E/AG/1 #9278

Dear Reverend McCarthy,

I thank you for your letter of December 10th [1968]

[written from Rome]

Regarding Al-Hikma, you may have to arm your soul in patience and resist for the time being any temptation to make your grievances the object of public debate and/or wishing to make official representation. It seems to me that it is in any case too early to indulge in too pessimistic speculations regarding the future of Al-Hikma and I feel that only time may solve your problem. This is admittedly a big set-back in a

lifetime but there have been precedents in the Jesuits' history which have invariably been overcome with patience and perseverance in the course of time. I have no doubt that one day again the importance of the service you were rendering in Iraq to higher education will be recognized and recent events will only remain as a bad memory.

It is with this fervent hope that I send best wishes for Christmas and a happier New Year from Mrs. Gulbenkian and myself.

Yours sincerely,  
Robert Gulbenkian

### Memories of happier times

In my first year in 1961 at B.C., I was on the second bus going home. When the bus went around the circle in front of the Administration building and parked to pick up the students, I noticed a lot of wet mud on the side of the bus. I very casually walked to the bus and sort of practiced my newly acquired English writing skills and wrote my full name on the side of the bus. Actually I etched it in the wet mud. I then went up and took my designated seat on the bus (not by the window by the way, but by the aisle since I was in my first year). The bus was about to move, when Fr. Thomas Kelley was doing his customary head count; then suddenly said Ghassan Jamil come with me!?! We both de-bused. He asked me if that was my inscription on the side of the bus. I thought he was admiring my skills and said "yes." At that point he waived Ama, the driver to proceed. He further instructed me to go to room (2D) *detention room* and write Ghassan Jamil 2000 times in a legible way. When my work was checked and approved then I went home by public *Amana* bus. It was very late in the evening when I got home, having learned my lesson very well.

Thirty-two years later in December 1993, I stood in front of the Administration building where the bus made the turn and remembered that incident. This was in my most recent trip back to Baghdad. I made a point of going to Baghdad College with my friend and colleague Sami Tobchi. It was a very moving experience to spend a couple of hours on campus. Many things have changed and aged a lot, but certain things are still probably as the Jesuits left them. There still are many palm tree skins laying on the ground used as benches. The beautiful wood railings in the Rice memorial building are intact, although needing a layer of varnish. Even the hefty hardware of the doors seemed to be operable. We spent some time in

Father Gerry's biology lab. Except for pipe smoke and classical music, not much has changed. The brick paved yards and walkways have been redone with asphalt and the wooden handball courts are gone. I could have easily spent an entire day just walking around but unfortunately my stay was very short. Sami and I ended our trip with a prayer by the Graves of the five Jesuits buried near the church. God rest their souls. (Ghassan Jamil Hami, B.C. '66)



*5,000 color postcards of this picture arrived for sale in the B.C. bookstore two months after the Jesuits were expelled.*





## Chapter 11

# The Biennial Celebrations: the Living Legacy of Alumni



*Love shows itself in deeds, not just in words  
Love consists in mutual sharing of goods  
Note Preliminary to the Contemplation of St. Ignatius*

### Summary

Early reunions of alumni were held in Baghdad both for Baghdad College and for Al-Hikma and were so successful that annual meetings were planned.

The first [Baghdad College] reunion was held on 12 January 1957, at the Hindia Club in Karrada. It was attended by a huge gathering where the Jesuits welcomed the participants. The food was delicious with Iraqi hot dishes and *qouzies* with the usual oriental stuffing. Bingo Band played the whole night. The place was so crowded that one could hardly breathe. The party ended in the early hours of the morning. The party was such a success that it became the talk of the town for weeks. This gave us an idea for future reunions once a year.

In 1958 Fr. Connell was at Al-Hikma University. The group decided that the second reunion be at the Hindia Club too while the third was held at Al Mansur Club. The sole reason was to change to a larger hall as the hall of the previous reunion was

too small. (Carlo Tonietti)

"Fr. Connell ran the first reunion of the Graduates of Al-Hikma on 11/2/64. 49 of the 52 known to be in Baghdad at the time attended. The evening consisted of a dinner and a discussion concerning starting an alumni association."

(Fr. McDonough letter 11/2/64)

The phenomenon of biennial reunions in this country, far from the two Baghdad campuses and decades after the two schools had ceased to exist, baffles alumni from other schools. So far there have been 8 reunions and the 9th is set in everyone's calendar. The date, location and attendance of alumni (estimated) and Jesuits are listed here.

#	year	date	place	city	alum	SJ
1	1977	8/5, 6, 7	Mundlein College	Chicago	150	33
2	1979	7/20, 21, 22	Mercy College	Detroit	300	31
3	1982	7/23, 24, 25	Boston College	Boston	300	33
4	1984	7/27, 28, 29	Southfield Man.	Detroit	400	27
5	1986	8/1, 2, 3		San Diego	300	24
6	1988	8/5, 6, 7	Southfield Man.	Detroit	400	25
7	1990	7/12,13,14,15	Woodfield Hyatt	Chicago	300	33
8	1992	7/30, 31, 8/1,2	Dearborn Hyatt	Detroit	400	31
9	1994	7/28, 29, 30, 31	San Fran. Hyatt	San Fran.	(scheduled)	

## How and why the reunions started

No Jesuit schools in the world can boast of alumni as loyal as those of Baghdad College and Al-Hikma University. Both teachers and alumni had a much deeper impact on each other and formed much stronger attachments than they ever thought possible when they were in the same classrooms long ago. Other Jesuits express their astonishment at the large numbers attending these reunions and wonder what on earth one could possibly do at a reunion of schools that ceased to function 25 years ago? Although the Baghdad Mission no longer exists many "tales told by the Tigris" were retold at these eight extraordinary reunions of the Baghdad Jesuits and their former students.

One would have to experience Iraqi and in particular Chaldean enthusiasm to believe it is real. The alumni come from all four corners of the United States: from Seattle, San Francisco, Atlanta, New York Muslims and Christians come, engineers, doctors and grocers come, graduates of the class of 1938 through to the class of 1969 come. Finally, about 30 Jesuits come. In 1986 one even



arrived in his khaki cassock.

The weekends are spent in a favorite Baghdad pastime - in conversation. Evident was the obvious delight of the alumni at seeing their old teachers and visa versa. Sixty-year old anecdotes are told and an elderly graduate produced from his wallet a Sacred Heart badge given him in 1947 - carried there ever since. The highlight of the weekend is a six hour dinner-dance with Iraqi music and Baghdad College comedians mimicking the idiosyncrasies of their favorite Jesuit teachers.



*The Saturday night dinner/dance party*

Further evidence of the warm affection for and gratitude to the "Fatheria" came in a spontaneous outburst in the very first meeting when a graduate placed some money on the central table and asked others to join him in contributing to the Jesuit retirement fund. In a very short time a large sum was pledged. Apparently the Jesuits did not look as fit as they looked when they were last seen in Baghdad. Since that first meeting every reunion has raised in excess of \$20,000 for the retired New England Jesuits. Most of the money comes from the ads in the yearbook paid for not only by alumni but also by American/Iraqi admirers of the Jesuit schools but who themselves did not have a chance to attend the Jesuit schools.

The efforts of the 143 Jesuits (and their colleagues) who for 37 years served Iraqi youth and demonstrated their deep concern for them and their families led to a strong and lasting bond of mutual respect and affection. In celebrating this fact our alumni are expressing their gratitude for what they have learned, something more than the periodic chart, the quadratic equation and how to play baseball. They learned a set of values and a way to implement them in their daily lives. They appreciate the fact that



the quality of their lives has been enriched, that compassion for others has been deepened, and that they understand the spiritual dimension of life. Now they ask of what service they can be to others.



*The Saturday morning business meeting*

It is true that we do not hold these celebrations in Sulaikh or Zafarania, but in Chicago, Detroit, Boston and San Diego far from Baghdad. Who would have guessed that 25 years after the expulsion the spirit of service would still be so vigorous among alumni, which is the precise point of the discussions at the celebration! How can we be of service to others?

As with many other Jesuit alumni they found one another, reflected on a common experience and decided to have a reunion honoring their former teachers. Jesuits and Iraqis have perhaps been somewhat surprised at how useful and practical these meetings have been. Unlike many school reunions, which are merely exercises in nostalgia we do not just retell (and re-enact) student pranks of the past, but quite seriously face the question of what can we contribute to our societies both here and in Iraq. Jesuits for their part, play an unaccustomed role. Now, they are unable to direct things, and disinclined to tell others what to do, but their presence at the reunions accentuates their continued support of their alumni of whom they are justifiably proud.

Over 300 alumni plus hundreds of family members and friends participate in each of these reunions. Shirts and jackets marked with Baghdad College and Al-Hikma emblems - much more elaborate than could be afforded during the days in Baghdad - are



displayed and sold to raise money for Jesuit Missions. To underline the joy of these weekend reunions, plans are always made for future reunions. Even more significant, however, are the remarks made more than once that the spiritual direction of the "Fatheria" was still needed for these Iraqis in the "Diaspora" - if such a word can be used for Iraqis. One graduate put it this way: "We have been very busy in our professions earning money and in our affluence here in America, we sometimes wonder why the Jesuits ever left America to work with us in Baghdad. The sacrifices they made reminds us that there is something much more valuable in life than our status and our jobs". In between these meetings some of the alumni meet for monthly Days of Prayer at Manresa Retreat House in Detroit. It seems that while the overwhelming theme of these unique gatherings was gratitude to the Fathers, the more important message to them as well as to the Jesuits is how intertwined were the lives of the Jesuits with the families of their students.

The alumni support of the Jesuit retirement fund indicates their concern that the present appearance of the "Fatheria" falls short of their memories of younger more vigorous Jesuits of past decades. They also discuss how they can find ways to help their children find a system of values which they had learned and a way to implement them in their daily lives. The reunions have been the occasion for many young Iraqis meeting one another, which in some cases have ended in marriages. The alumni appreciate the fact that their lives have been enriched, that compassion for others has been deepened and that they understand the spiritual dimension of life. Now they ask how can they be of service to others and how they can help their children find what has enriched their lives.

As one of the alumni put it: "The purpose of the reunions is to respect and honor the Jesuits who spent their youth in Iraq, educating us, caring for us, and praying for us. Besides a quality education, I gained discipline, a deepening of faith in God, charity, and hope. Also, that certain ends do not justify the means employed in achieving them." (Wael Hindo, B.C. '60, A.H. '64)

The spirit of gratitude and loyalty that characterizes the Reunions is ample proof that our work in Baghdad has been truly worth while. Through these Reunions we are able to keep in touch with the spectacular success of our graduates in so many fields of activity. And this confirms its fact that the influence of Baghdad College continues on, even though the Jesuit presence has been taken away. The Reunions offer concrete evidence of the educational soundness of this



curriculum of Baghdad College.

One of my great joys at these Reunions is talking over old times with those I had taught 40 and 50 years ago and who now proudly present to me their sons and grandsons. It amazes me how my students recall things I had said to them back in these days which profoundly influenced their lives. (Fr. Sullivan)

Every year there are thousands of school reunions that are held across the U.S. However, this reunion that brings us together this weekend is special in more ways than one. It is a reunion of former students and friends of two schools that no longer exist as we knew them, but that must have left a lasting influence on many of us to remember after many years and thousands of miles away.

In a reunion, people get together to reminisce about their common school experiences of growing up, to renew old acquaintances and to learn about the paths their friends have followed in life. All of this we are looking forward to, in this our third reunion of alumni, former students and friends of Baghdad College and Al-Hikma University. However, to many of us, there is another underlying and deeper motivation to be part of this reunion. This is to express our gratitude and appreciation to a group of dedicated people who gave so much of their lives and efforts to a worthy cause, and who have touched our lives in many and different ways. These are the Jesuits who founded and served at Baghdad College and Al-Hikma University.



*Dave Nona makes a point*

Where we are and what we are at this stage of our lives, are the results of many factors and influences, some of which were consciously chosen, and others we had little control over.





However, if we reflect deeply on our experiences, it is not hard for many of us to conclude that our education and association with the Jesuits were some of the more fortunate and enhancing experiences of our lives. Whether an experience led us to the career we are in, or taught us to be competitive and persistent through athletics, or caring and compassionate through good example, or helped us to better understand ourselves and the reality of the world around us, or contributed to shaping our outlook on life, we are grateful for the experience.

The challenge before us now is to synthesize our varied experiences in Iraq and the United States into a meaningful and optimistic outlook that sees value in the interaction and interdependence of seemingly different peoples and cultures. We have a unique opportunity, I dare say the responsibility to serve, both on the personal level and as a group, as bridges of understanding between our original and host cultures. We should strive to transcend differences and bring out what is of value and life-enhancing in both cultures, to attest to the richness and unity of the human experience. (Dave Nona, B.C. '64, A.H. '68, *Reunion Yearbook III*, 1982, p. 8)



*Putting what they learned at Baghdad College to good use*

## **Baghdad Jesuit Alumni Association: B.J.A.A.**

### **Humanitarian Efforts**

This [1992, eighth] Reunion coincided with the second anniversary of the tragic events which precipitated the Gulf War and the continuing tragedy in Iraq. These past two years have been difficult and agonizing for many of us, and particularly the sense of frustration and helplessness for not being able to do much to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people. It is a small consolation, however, to know that many

graduates and former students of the Jesuits have contributed to humanitarian relief efforts and work in other ways to improve conditions in Iraq. The following article illustrates the modest efforts initiated and single-handedly managed by Ramzi Hermiz with help from the Jesuits. The presentation during this reunion by Dr. Eric Hoskins about humanitarian relief efforts to Iraq is meant to emphasize the continuing dire need for help, and to remind us, who have been blessed with much, to remember the suffering people of Iraq. (Dave Nona, B.C. '64, A.H. '68, *Reunion Yearbook VIII*, 1992, p. 7)

The Chaldean-Iraqi fund was initiated on February 12, 1991 by Ramzi Yousif Hermiz and Majid Aziz Shammami to solicit donations and assistance for the people of Iraq during and following the Gulf War. The Jesuit Mission Bureau and Seminary Bureau in Boston, through Brother James McDavitt and Fr. William Russell, agreed on that day to become the recipient of donations and the disbursing of expenses for the humanitarian assistance. In addition, Jesuit Missions agreed not only to allow the use of our directory mailing list for communications, but also to become a co-sponsor of the effort to solicit contributions.

Initially, it was intended to deliver one truck load of medicines and medical supplies (worth approximately \$100,000) with the expectation that the medical supplies would have to be purchased. After a few days of investigation on an international scope, it became evident that instead of "purchasing" the medical supplies, the value of our donations could be multiplied by working with other humanitarian organizations in collecting donated medical supplies from various countries and arranging to deliver the medical supplies directly to Iraq. By a timing coincidence, on that same week of February 12, 1991, an international organization called the "Gulf Peace Team" was organizing an effort to collect and deliver to Iraq the first medical supplies since the beginning of war on January 16, 1991.

An agreement was made with the "Gulf Peace Team" to deliver to Iraq in the name of, and as donations from the Chaldean-Iraqi Fund, 10 truck loads of medical supplies with a wholesale market value of about one million dollars. Our first truck (out of a four-truck medical supplies convoy) left Amman on February 17, 1991 and reached Baghdad on February 18, 1991 (that is during the war, when the Amman-Baghdad Highway was being bombed continuously day and night). After that, our fund was credited for three convoys, each with three trucks that arrived in Baghdad on



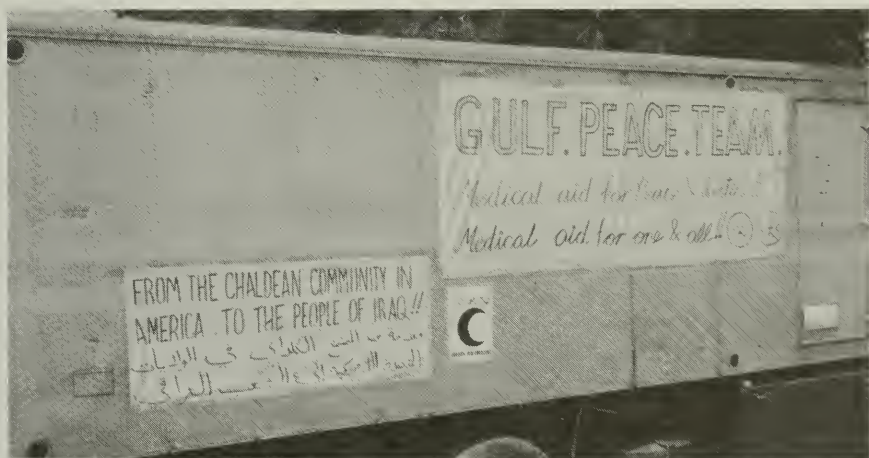
March 6, March 11 and March 25, 1991.

For each medical supplies truck (containing about 4 tons of medical supplies) we have item-by-item detailed formal receipts (listing the individual medical items and their individual quantities) from the Iraqi Red Crescent Society in Baghdad acknowledging the medical supplies as donations from the Chaldean-Iraqi Fund. Credit for each convoy was shared with another humanitarian organization from another country: convoys one and two from Germany, convoy three from Austria, and convoy four from Canada.

The Chaldean-Iraqi Fund also donated approximately \$17,600, which was distributed directly to about 111 Iraqi families in 5 refugee camps in Turkey and 4 refugee camps in Syria. But probably the most memorable donation by the Chaldean-Iraqi Fund was the \$14,000 sponsoring the publishing expenses of the 300-page *Harvard Study Team* report titled, "Health and Welfare in Iraq after the Gulf Crisis." Information and excerpts from the report have been the subject of many U.S. and international TV and radio programs and news articles.

All of these achievements were financially taken care of from approximately \$68,118, donated by about 240 alumni and friends. Included were 18 donations of \$1,000 each, and seven other donations between \$1,000 and \$5,000.

(Ramzi Hermiz, B.C. '48, *Reunion Yearbook VIII*, 1992, p. 7)



*The Gulf Peace Team of the B.J.A.A. One of the ten Medical Convoy trucks sponsored by the Chaldean-Iraqi Fund of Alumni & Friends*

Available public records indicate that the four-truck Medical Convoy co-sponsored by the "Chaldean-Iraqi Fund", leaving



Amman, Jordan on 2/17/91 and arriving in Baghdad on 2/18/91 (that is, during the war, when the Amman-Baghdad Highway was being bombed continuously day and night), carried into Iraq the very first desperately needed medical supplies since the beginning of the war and its destructive bombardments. This was two days before the arrival of a two-truck United Nations Medical Convoy.

To reduce the possibility of potential complications, the word "Iraqi" was sometimes "deleted" intentionally from the title of "Chaldean-Iraqi Fund" as in the "banner on the truck, and as in the "Acknowledgments" page of the book: "Health and Welfare in Iraq - after the Gulf Crisis" researched by the "Harvard Study Team". However, the "full title" is indicated in the formal communications and acknowledgments from the "Iraqi Red Crescent" and from the "Harvard Study Team" as is indicated in the following two letters.

Harvard Study Team

29 June 1992

Mr. Ramiz Hermiz    Chaldean-Iraqi Fund 4N 321 Route 53  
Addison, Illinois, 60101    United States

Dear Ramiz,

This letter is to confirm receipt of funds totaling 4,000 United States dollars which the Chaldean-Iraqi Fund has kindly donated towards additional printing and publication of the Harvard Study Team report on Iraq.

As you recall, the total contribution of the Chaldean-Iraqi Fund to the Harvard Study Team is now 14,000 United States dollars.

The Harvard Study Team would like to express their sincere gratitude for the support given to them by members of the Chaldean community in America, and by the Chaldean-Iraqi Fund.

Best regards,

Dr. Eric Hoskins    Co-coordinator of the Harvard Study Team.

Iraqi Red Crescent Society    General Headquarters  
Al-Mansour - Baghdad    P.O. Box 6143  
Tel- 5375940    March 17, 1991

To: The Chaldean-Iraqi Fund of the Chaldean Community in  
America

Medico-International, Germany    Gulf Peace Team



The Iraqi Red Crescent Society acknowledges receipt of the medicines described in the enclosed list (five pages).

These medicines and their transportation to Baghdad were donated jointly by 'The Chaldean-Iraqi Fund' of the Chaldean Community in America, and Medico-International, Germany.

The medical supplies were taken to Baghdad on a humanitarian convoy jointly organized by the Jordanian National Red Crescent Society, the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, and the Gulf Peace Team.

The humanitarian convoy departed from Amman, Jordan on 17 February 1991 and reached Baghdad on 18 February. The medical supplies were delivered to the Iraqi Red Crescent Society at their hospital in El Mansour, Baghdad.

We thank you for your contribution.

With best wishes (Seal)

Dr. Ibrahim A. Al-Nouri

President [of Iraqi Red Crescent]

## Occupations of Baghdad College Alumni

### **As professionals and as contributors to their communities and adopted countries**

Graduates of both schools have distinguished themselves in many fields. Some of the alumni tell of their work.

A high percentage of former students of Baghdad College and Al-Hikma University have distinguished themselves in the professions of business and politics in Iraq as well as in their adopted countries, particularly the United States. The contribution of the alumni who stayed to serve in Iraq are too varied and numerous to include here. Also contact with many of them has been infrequent because of the current situation in Iraq. The list of alumni includes doctors and engineers who, out of a sense of commitment, gave up lucrative opportunities outside of Iraq to teach and help at home and who were instrumental in the industrialization of the country.

Many of the former students who had emigrated to the west and particularly the United States were well equipped to pursue graduate and professional studies. They excelled in their studies and later in their careers because of the strong academic background and set of values they had acquired through their Jesuit education.

In areas of heavy concentration of Iraqi and Chaldean emigrant communities in the U.S. such as Detroit, Michigan; Chicago, Illinois; New York and California, it is common to find

alumni on the faculties of colleges, on the medical staff of hospitals and as successful associates and owners of professional firms in engineering, architecture, accounting and law. Furthermore, many of the alumni who started in business upon completing their studies have built successful and thriving enterprises in retailing (primarily in the grocery and food areas), in real estate development and in financial services.



*A few Al-Hikma geniuses*

The schools can also boast of several scholars and politicians such as Fr. Stanley Marrow, S.J. who had authored several books in Theology, Fr. Solomon Sara, S.J. who is a linguistic scholar at Georgetown University, Dr. Faraj Abdulahad who became the Dean of the Business School at Manhattan College and Mr. Wadie P. Deddeh who for over 20 years, was a State Senator in California from the San Diego area. (Dave Nona, B.C. '64, A.H. '68)



*Some B.C. graduates: The hope for the future*

After finishing Baghdad Medical College in 1937 I obtained a Ph.D. in Dermatology and later became the Professor of





Dermatology and Venereology at the Baghdad Medical College in Baghdad. In 1970 I brought my family to England and took a consultant job, then retired in 1985. The late Albert Sabbagh studied Ophthalmology, and Harbi Merroghe Delli worked as a G.P. In the year 1938 Armand Bahoshy and the late David Mesayeh joined the Medical College and probably few other graduates as well. From my class Edward Toma Zoma joined the College of Pharmacy and Abboudi Talia went to the Law College, and both went to USA where I lost contact with them in spite my inquiries in 1990 and 92 when I was in Detroit. Tariq Munir Abbas went to Scotland to do medicine and took up Midwifery and Gynecology and later on became a consultant and the last time I spoke to him on the phone in 1984 was working in Scotland. Alumni meetings in Baghdad used to be a common yearly event which I always used to attend and every time see some new Fathers have joined the College. Many a time we took our families to these gatherings as well as during Christmas and Easter. One of the outstanding features of Baghdad College and later of Al-Hikma graduates was that they were sought after by companies looking for recruits. Baghdad College graduates became a model for which banks and even government institutions used to look for. Even those lads who spent only a year or two gained some privilege. (George Rahim, B.C. '37)

My father, God bless him, moved us from Al-Sinak to Sulaikh, across the road from Baghdad College, because he wanted us to be influenced by the Jesuits. [It is surprising how many families moved to Sulaikh for similar reasons; some of these are listed by Mouwaffak in the map on page 30.] My four brothers and I lived there and got to know the Jesuits very well: all five of us went to Baghdad College. Later we sold our house moved to the United States in 1969. But while I was there, the Jesuits taught me to be humble, down to earth and to help those who needed help by sacrificing their lives for others without expecting return back on this earth. They are true Catholic, excellent Christians, true disciples of Christ. Although I can't be like them, I am trying to follow on the same footsteps of the Jesuits.

The curricula at Baghdad College was excellent as I noticed when I left for further studies. I found that I did not have to study as much as I did at Baghdad College. Today, I am more thorough because of Jesuit teachings. Apart from academics I learned discipline. The campus was the best in Iraq, with the

best facilities as well as the cleanliness of the campus. I am an expert because more than once I had to clean up the trash from the fields as a punishment. When I was pronounced as the most valuable player at the end of the 1960 basketball season I realized it was Jesuit training and discipline that did this to me, then and today.

When I was a teenager, I used to go to the church everyday around 6:00 A.M. to serve masses and I participated in the Christmas midnight services for many years. After all, we used to live across from Baghdad College, within thirty feet from the school. After earning a Bachelor's degree from Baghdad University, school of architecture, and Master's from the University of Detroit I became an Architect and opened an architectural firm in Detroit in 1975 through 1981. There I designed many homes and parish buildings for the Chaldeans in Southfield, Michigan. Now I am the architect for the St. Peter's Church in San Diego, CA. and am the architectural branch manager for the Naval Facilities Engineering Command at Southwest Division in San Diego, CA. I have twenty-three architects, engineers and interior designers working in my branch. (Mouwaffak {Michael} Sitto, B.C. '59)

Other alumni projects, programs and adventures are listed in Appendix D.

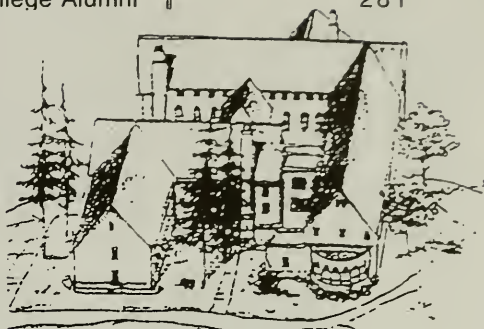


*Alumni retreatants*

### **The Retreat movement**

In the late 70's and as a direct consequence of the first reunion in Chicago, Fr. Joseph MacDonnell, S.J. offered to direct a day of recollection for a group of alumni and former students in the Detroit area. The first one was held at Colombiere Retreat House in Clarkston (outside Detroit). For the next five years he came out to conduct annual days of

prayer at Manresa Jesuit Retreat House in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. As a result of these days of recollection, a prayer and study group was formed that met on regular monthly basis at Manresa for dinner, Bible study, reflection and Mass.



Manresa Jesuit Retreat House  
Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

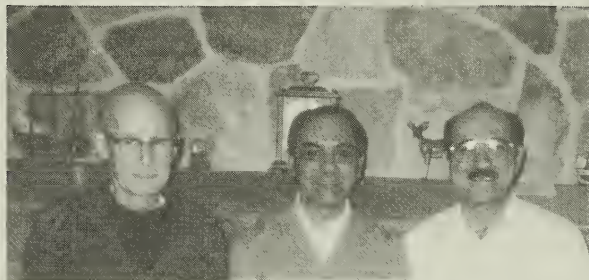
The group continued to meet for many years because the hospitality and involvement of the Manresa Jesuits, as well as the grounds and environment at Manresa reminded the group so much of Baghdad College and Al-Hikma. Through these meetings, members of the group and other alumni renewed the practice of making regular retreats at Manresa. The relationship between the alumni and the Detroit Jesuits has grown and developed to the point where some alumni are serving on fund raising committees for programs sponsored by the Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus. In fact, the Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus can rightfully claim some connection to the Baghdad Jesuit Mission. Since Fr. Edward Madaras, S.J. who was one of the founders of Baghdad College grew up in Defiance, Ohio and was a member of the Detroit Province.



Tahir Bazirgan and son



Most importantly, however, there has been a deeper realization and appreciation on the part of the alumni of the universality, wide-ranging and dedicated mission of the Jesuits. The Detroit Jesuits, in turn, have come to value and appreciate in their midst, the presence and contributions of men and women who had been shaped by the dedication of their brother Jesuits at a different time and a far away place, near the Garden of Eden. (Dave Nona, B.C. '64, A.H. '68)



*Fr. Ryan, Premjit Talwar and Dave Nona*

Almost 30 years ago I passed through Al-Hikma gates and glanced at the vast grounds that would be my second home for the next four years. I sat in my first terraced classroom, taking the entrance exam. At the time, my first preference was to study architecture, a subject not offered at Al-Hikma. What made me change my mind was not the sound logic and persuasion of my parents, but the impersonal treatment, depressing atmosphere and lengthy bureaucratic application process at Baghdad University. My non-Arabic name was carelessly mispronounced eliciting the laughter of those present. Contrasting that to the efforts the Jesuits made to make sure they spelled and pronounced my name correctly, I decided to join Al-Hikma. I knew then that what the Jesuits stood for was far more than textbook education. In addition to their ready smile and quick hello, they were dedicated and paid attention to small personal details. They treated me with the same dignity and respect given to the son of a Emir.

Unlike the Iraqi teachers and administrators, the Jesuits were not absorbed with self-importance. Obviously they took their work extremely seriously. But they did this with a smile on their face and a passion in their heart. They were very approachable, always considering my thoughts and suggestions as worthy, a treatment that was foreign in my prior experience. This is especially remarkable since I attended Frank Iny School, a private Jewish school of very high standards. Humble as they were, the Jesuits easily



commanded the respect they deserved. They did this not by fear or intimidation as was common from their Iraqi counterparts, but by their humanity and humility. They possessed solid knowledge and a commitment to excellence long before it became the business fad of the late 80s. They impressed me with their lack of ego (not too many Iraqis would admit in front of a class that they did not know the answer), generosity, flexibility, self-discipline, tremendous energy and industry, a wonderful sense of humor, openness and the ability to give one all the time one needed. They genuinely cared.

In the ethics class, Fr. Campbell encouraged debate and questioning. He suggested that I explore similarities and differences between the Judeo-Christian religion and Buddhism, a subject beyond the scope of the classwork. Fr. Kelly approached me to help identify needy Jewish families who could benefit from free food, a lesson in social responsibility. Fr. William Larkin encouraged me to participate in a summer science project which was later presented to visiting dignitaries, an extra curriculum activity. Fr. McDonough supported my efforts to perform music during the festive parties. And Fr. Mulvehill was ready to display my new paintings. To the Jesuits, education went far beyond the learning of a book. It focused on the shaping of a personality.

This preparation perhaps explains the relative ease with which I faced studying at MIT. Don't misunderstand me. I worked very hard and put in long hours. But I also played hard and enjoyed the "free" times. I did not allow problems to overwhelm me nor did I succumb to the temptation of an easy way out. I graduated with two masters (the only one to do so in that year), a tribute to the discipline and training instilled in me by these outstanding men of the robe. Today, I can't help but live by their example.

I was so taken by their selfless dedication, that many times I seriously considered joining their order. However, their mission was not one of proselytizing, and they discouraged me even from attending Mass. Ironically, even though I have not changed my faith, I now often attend Mass with my Christian friends. (Premjit Talwar, AH '68)



## Epilogue

The Christians cherished the work of the Jesuits from the start and the earlier suspicions of Muslims dissolved once they realized that the Jesuits were not covertly trying to convert their sons but were offering them an excellent education. In fact Muslims are listed among the Jesuits' strongest supporters. They saw them as religious men whose only purpose was to take seriously Jesus' admonition to serve others. That service came in the form of education. Muslims and Christians alike came to realize that the Jesuits introduced to the Baghdad community unanticipated intellectual, spiritual and social benefits.

The most interesting part of the Baghdad College and Al-Hikma story does not concern buildings, curricula or huge campuses but concerns rather the people that built and used these creations. It still is the students, their families, the Jesuits and their colleagues that make us remember that "fleeting wisp of glory" with such emotion. This story of the Baghdad Jesuit adventure focuses on the interaction between young American Jesuits and youthful Iraqi citizens and their families. It started in 1932 and then grew into a strong bond of affection and respect.

Much more than other Jesuits in their American schools the "Baghdadi" Jesuits entered the family lives of their students frequently and intimately through home visits to celebrate Muslim and Christian feast days as well as a myriad of social events, both happy and sad. There was much more than ordinary student-teacher bonding. On campus the Jesuits participated in games, debates, drama, contests, athletic events almost as much as the students. Jesuits became enthusiastic about their Iraqi charges when they noticed early on that there was a great affinity between these Iraqi students and themselves. Jesuits found the Iraqi students warm, hospitable, humorous, imaginative, receptive, hard-working and appreciative of educational opportunities. This story presents evidence that the Iraqis found the Jesuits happy, fun-loving and dedicated.

As the years went on Iraqis increasingly liked them and were proud of the two schools as part of the Iraqi scene. Each of the many government crises were opportunities for successive governments to force the Jesuits to leave. The fact that they were always allowed to continue is testimony to how widely Jesuits had been accepted. The exception was the Baathi coup in 1968. In spite of the Jesuits' strenuous efforts to remain in Iraq, they joined the long line of Jesuits in various lands at various times who were expelled from their adopted country.



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Telegrams from Francis Sarjeant, S.J. to James H. Dolan, S.J.  
Letter to the Society of Jesus from W. Ledochowski, S.J. Superior  
General of the Society of Jesus, 8/15/37  
Province Letters (New England Province Archives)  
Other personal communications already mentioned  
Yusuf Emmanuel II {Chaldean Patriarch}
- |                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Burke, James L., S.J.    | McEleney John J., S.J.     |
| Coffey, J. Edward, S.J.  | Merrick, Joseph P., S.J.   |
| Dolan, James H., S. J.   | Murphy, George M., S.J.    |
| Gookin, Vincent A., S.J. | Phillips, Thomas, C., S.J. |
| Kilroy, James M., S.J.   | Sarjeant, Francis B., S.J. |
| Madaras, Edward, S.J.    | Rice, William, S.J.        |
| McCarthy, Richard, S.J.  | Walsh, Edmund A., S.J.     |

# Appendix B Chronology

## Brief 40 year chronology of B.C. in a world setting

Baghdad College	Date	World events
Request of Iraq's Christians	1929	Stock market crash
Fr. Ledohovsky's letter	1930	Discovery of the planet Pluto
Visit of Edmund A. Walsh	1931	Iraqi Petroleum Company
Jesuit Arrival: Start of B.C.	1932	Atom is split by scientists
Purchase of 25 acres	1933	King Faisal I dies: Ghazi King
B.C. moved to Sulaikh	1934	John Dillinger slain by FBI
New Iraq conscription laws	1935	Italy invades Ethiopia
Construction starts buildings	1936	Oil discovered in Saudi Arabia
First (5 year) B.C. graduation	1937	German zeppelin Hindenburg
Classes start in new building	1938	First fission of uranium
Completion of Residence	1939	King Ghazi dies in an accident
First Al Iraqi published as book	1940	Germans take Paris
1500 foot circumferential wall	1941	Pearl Harbor: Rachid Ali
Boarding house partitioned	1942	Battle of Midway
Number boarders peaks at 68	1943	Successful use of penicillin
Enrollment quadruples '38-44	1944	D-Day: Attempt on Hitler's life
Fr. Madaras becomes Rector	1945	First atomic bomb: WW II ends
Death of founder Fr. W. Rice	1946	First session of U.N.
el Iraqi printed in Lebanon	1947	Transistor is invented.
First Intermediate bb team	1948	Israel is created in Palestine.
School in Teheran is planned	1949	Germany partitioned: NATO
el Iraqi becomes al Iraqi	1950	Start of Korean war
B.C. at Pan Arab Olympics	1951	First UNIVAC computer
Rains and flooding at B.C.	1952	Egyptian revolution: Nasser
Sacred Heart Chapel built	1953	Death of Stalin
Planning begins for Al-Hikma	1954	Battle of Dienbienphu.
Iraq gives land for A.H.	1955	Warsaw pact
Start of classes at Al-Hikma	1956	Suez Crisis
Visit of King Faisal II	1957	Common market: Sputnik
B.C. wins the city bb cup	1958	Iraq becomes republic.
Al-Hikma to Zafar.: Xn Center	1959	Hawaii admitted into the U.S.
First Graduation at Al-Hikma	1960	OPEC is founded
First year of the Lay Volunt.	1961	Kuwait gains independence
A.H. becomes co-ed: Lib.Arts	1962	Revolt of the Kurds in Iraq
Start of Minor Sem. at B.C.	1963	Death of Pope John XXIII
Last year of boarding division	1964	P.L.O. initiated
Parents' days at B.C. start	1965	U.S. begins bombing N. Vietnam.
Plans for Oriental Institute	1966	Arif becomes president of Iraq
Lay Volunteers' program	1967	Third Arab-Israeli War
Dismissal of Jesuits from A.H.	1968	Baathi come to power in Iraq
Dismissal of Jesuits from B.C.	1969	Apollo 10 lands on the moon





# Appendix C Lists of names

## 1 The 143 Jesuits who served in Baghdad

Anderson, Francis	†	(35-40)(47)	MacDonnell, Joseph		(55-58)(64-69)
Armitage, Clement	†	(39-43)	MacNeil, Sidney M.	†	(37-39)(43-69)
Banks, Edward J.		(52-68)	Macomber, William		(51-53)(62-69)
Banks, John P.		(45-48)(58-69)	MacWade, Joseph A.		(55-58)(66-69)
Belcher, Francis H.		(55-58)(64-69)	McCarthy, James H.		(58-61)(67)(69)
Bennett, Joseph T.		(51-54)(61-69)	McCarthy, John J.		(61-64)
Bergen, Franklyn J.		(61-63)	McCarthy, John Joseph	†	(52-55)(60-69)
Bonian, Stephen J.		(69)	McCarthy, Michael	†	(36-38)(43-59)
Burby, Clarence J.		(61-64)	McCarthy, Richard	†	(38-41)(51-69)
Burns, Eugene P.	†	(64-66)(69)	McDermott, Martin J.		(58-61)
Campbell, Robert B.		(50-54)(61-69)	McDermott, Thomas		(45-47)
Cardoni, Albert J.		(54-57)(65-69)	McDonald, Douglas A.		(67-68)
Carroll, Paul R.		(64)	McDonough, Leo J.	†	(48-51)(59-69)
Carty, John A.		(53-56)(61-69)	McGrath, John J.		(46-48)
Casey, William J.	†	(36)(44-45)(69)	McGuinness, Francis	†	(36)
Cheney, Edmund K.		(38-39)	McHugh, Donald F.		(57-59)
Coffey, Edward J.	†	(32-35)	McLeod, Frederick G.		(56-59)(69)
Como, Denis R.		(60-63)(69)	Madaras, Edward F.	†	(32-44)(45-67)
Connell, Joseph F.	†	(34-36)(43-69)	Mahan, Charles W.	†	(35-46)(48-59)
Connolly, Michael J.		(69)	Mahoney, John L.		(45-48)(53-69)
Cornellier, John G.		(54-56)	Manning, Thomas C.	†	(60)
Cote, Robert J.		(60-69)	Marrow, Stanley, B.		(55-57)(66-69)
Cronin, Francis X.	†	(40-43)(49-53)	Martin, Joseph L.	†	(68)
Crowley, Charles G.		(54-55)(59-69)	Merrick, Joseph P.	†	(33-69)
Crowley, Charles	†	(56-57)	Meyding, Gregory F.		(62-64)
Curran, Francis X.		(50-53)	Mifsud, John(Miff)	†	(32-46)(47-64)
Decker, Neil F.		(52-55)(60-68)	Morgan, James F.		(48-51)(57-69)
Delaney, Ralph B.		(46-48)	Morrissey, John D.		(60-61)
DeNapoli, George A.	†	(61-63)	Mulcahy, James F.		(68-69)
Devenny, John J. A.		(39-49)	Mulvehill, Thomas	†	(47-55)(57-69)
Diskin, John J.		(48-59)(68-69)	Nash, Paul A.		(46-49)(54-69)
Doherty, Robert G.		(55-57)	Neidermeir, Jerome		(69)
Donohue, John J.		(53-56)(66-69)	Nugent, Patrick J.		(64-66)
DuBrul, Peter D.		(62)	Nwyia, Paul		(60-63)
Dunn, Charles J.		(49-52)	O'Brien, Robert F.		(59)
Egan, William T.		(54-56)	O'Connor, Joseph E.		(53-56)(61-69)
Fallon, Joseph F.		(53-55)	O'Halloran, James J.		(65-67)
Farrell, Robert D.		(58-61)	O'Kane, Joseph F.	†	(48-51)(56-69)
Fennell, Joseph G.		(39-43)(50-69)	O'Neil, Francis J.		(46-47)
Ferrick, Robert T.		(52-54)	Owens, John V.	†	(57-67)
Flaucher, Joseph J.		(55-58)(63-69)	Paquet, Joseph A.		(53-56)(61-69)
Flynn, Richard J.		(69)	Parnoff, Italo A.		(47-68)
Foley, Lawrence J.		(54-58)(66-68)	Pelletier, Walter R.		(54-57)(63-69)
Foley, Ernest B.	†	(56-59)	Powers, Harold R.		(50-54)(59-69)
Foster, Raymond F.	†	(68)	Powers, James F.		(58-60)
Galvani, John J.		(63-69)	Quinn, Joseph D.	†	(45-55)(56-69)
Gerry, Stanislaus	†	(47-57)(58-69)	Raphael, Yusuf H.		(63-66)(69)
Gibbons, Thomas J.		(54-57)(65-68)	Regan, Robert F.		(53-56)(64-69)
Gloster, George F.		(54-57)	Rice, William A.	†	(32-39)
Gooklin, Vincent A.	†	(35-47)	Rust, Charles H.	†	(67)
Greene, Merrill F.	†	(69)	Ryan, Joseph L.		(45-47)(54-69)
Guay, Leo J.	†	(44-56)(57-69)	Sara, Solomon, I.		(57-60)
Hallen, Edward F.	†	(58-60)	Sarjeant, Francis	†	(34-48)
Hamel, J. Thomas		(51-55)(63-66)	Scopp, Andrew J.		(57-60)(66-69)
Harman, Paul F.		(62-65)	Servas, John	†	(36-37)
Healey, Charles J.		(59-62)	Shea, James P.		(44-45)
Hicks, Alfred J.		(60-63)(69)	Shea, Leo J.	†	(38-47)(48-69)
Holland, D. Kerry		(68)	Shea, Walter M.		(53-55)
Hoyt, George F.		(39-43)	Sheehan, William	†	(36-47)(48-66)
Hussey, Thomas F.		(37-40)(45-69)	Skelskey, David A.		(61-64)
Ibach, William D.		(53-56)(61-69)	Smith, Simon E.		(55-58)
Jolson, Alfred J.	†	(52-55)(63-64)	Spillane, James A.		(69)
Kelly, Edmund F.		(52-55)(60-69)	Stanley, Richard J.		(66-68)
Kelly, Frederick	†	(49-52)(59-69)	Sullivan, Robert J.		(43-51)(52-69)
Kelly, Thomas J.	†	(45-55)(56-69)	Taft, Robert F.		(56-59)
Keough, Arthur J.		(66)	Teeling, John P.		(67-68)
Kinsella, Gerald A.		(69)	Travers, David O.		(62-65)
LaBran, Joseph J.		(49-58)	Walsh, James P.		(57)
Larkin, James F.	†	(44-54)(57-69)	Wand, Augustine	†	(34-36)
Larkin, William J.		(46-49)(60-69)	Williams, John J.	†	(37-40)(44-67)
Loeffler, Charles	†	(43-50)(52-69)	Young, Walter J.		(59-62)(67-69)
Lynch, Thomas J.	†	(46-50)			

† signifies deceased

## 2 Names of correspondents Jesuits & alumni

### Jesuit Names      years in Baghdad

Edward Banks	52-68
Frank Belcher	55-58, 64-69
Vincent Burns	{52-54}
Robert Campbell	50-54, 61-69
John Carty	53-56, 61-69
Charles Crowley	53-55, 58-69
Neil Decker	52-55, 60-68
Ralph Delaney	45-48
John Donohue	53-56, 66-69
Joseph Fennell	39-43, 50-69
Lawrence Foley	54-58, 66-68
Alfred Hicks	60-63, 68-69
Thomas Hussey	37-59, 66-69
Alfred Jolson	52-55, 63-64
Joseph LaBran	49-58
Jos. MacDonnell	55-58, 64-69
John Mahoney	45-48, 53-69
Stanley Marrow	55-57, 66-68
Jim Morgan	48-51, 56-69
Paul Nash	46-49, 54-69
Joseph O'Connor	53-56, 61-69
Walter Pelletier	54-57, 63-69
Joseph Ryan	45-47, 54-69
Solomon Sara	57-60
Simon Smith	55-58
James Spillane	68-69
Robert Sullivan	43-51, 52-69
Robert Taft	56-59
Walter Young	59-62, 67-69

Zuhair al-Dhafir	52-57
Hamid Attisha	58-63
Tahir Bazirgan	56-59
Hikmat Emmanuel	39-44
Yuil Eprim	52-57
George Faradi	32-37
Adolf Forage	43-48
Sarkis Garibian	47-52
Shawqi G. Gazala	59-64
Jack J George	63-67
Raad Habib	62-68
Ramzi Y. Hermiz	42-48
Waiel Hindo	54-60
Fakhri Jazrawi	56-57
Elwin Kennedy	39-42
Stanley Marrow	42-47
Dave Nona	59-64
Farid Oufi	43-48
George F. Rahim	32-37
Kamal E Rayes	64-66
Saib Shunia	47-52
Michael Sitto	55-59
Allen L. Svoboda	53-58
Carlo Tonietti	45-50
Raymond Vincent	48-53
K. Youkhanna	64-66
Luay Zebouni	62-67
Edward T. Zoma	32-37

### Lay Volunteers

Robert Finlay	68-69
Joseph Flibbert	61-62
John E. Jordan	63-65
Ed Reynolds	63-64
John Rossetti	66-67
Mike Toner	63-65

### B.C. Alumni      years

Peter D. Atchoo	42-47
A-Majid alDahhan	54-59

### Al-H. Alumni      years

Hamid Attisha	63-67
Tahir Bazirgan	61-67
Edward Butros	64-68
Yuil Eprim	57-61
Jack J George	68-69
Waiel A. Hindo	60-64
Fakhri Jazrawi	61-62
Dave Nona	64-68
Sr. Jos. Pelletier	62-66
Premjit Talwar	64-68



### 3. Al-Hikma faculty & staff for the year 1967-68

Rev. Richard J. McCarthy	Miss Dikranuhi Simonian
Rev. John P. Banks	Mr. Nabil Francis
Rev. Eugene P. Burns	Mr. Tariq Kakos
Rev. Robert B. Campbell	Mr. Wayil Hindu
Rev. Albert A. Cardoni	Mr. Jochen Langer
Rev. Joseph P. Connell	Mr. Philipp Muller
Rev. Robert J. Cote	Sister Aurelia, O.P.
Rev. Charles G. Crowley	Sister Columba, I.H.M.
Bro. Raymond F. Foster	Sister M. Louise, S.L.
Rev. Leo J. Guay	Sister Shelia, I.H.M.
Rev. Frederck W. Kelly	Miss Jeanne Brennan
Rev. James P. Larkin	Mr. John Dodig
Rev. William J. Larkin	Mr. Edward Giegengack
Rev. Joseph A. MacWade	Mr. Dirk-Jan J. van Lottum
Rev. Stanley B. Marrow	Miss Mary Rose Sidari
Rev. Joseph L. Martin	Mr. A-Fattah Amin (Accounting)
Rev. Michael J. McCarthy	Mr. A-Razzak A-Wahab (Law)
Rev. Joseph F. MacDonnell	Mr. A-Wahid Makhzumi (Stat.)
Rev. Leo J. McDonough	Mr. Adnan al-Ghreibawi (Stat.)
Rev. Thomas B. Mulvehill	Mr. Dhia Azzu (Business)
Rev. Paul A. Nash	Mr. Garabet Zulumian (Chem.)
Rev. Joseph P. O'Kane	Dr. Hatif Jalil (Chemistry)
Rev. Joseph L. Ryan	Dr. Inad al-Ghazwan (Arabic)
Rev. Thomas Gibbons	Mr. Jibrail Rumaya (Soils)
Rev. Douglas A. McDonald	Mr. Mahdi Omran Issa (survey.)
Rev. William Macomber	Mr. Mufid Mirza (Accounting)
Rev. Joseph E. O'Connor	Mr. Madhat Fadhil (Irrigation)
	Dr. Moneim A-Wahab (Eco.)
	Dr. Muhammad Mahdi (Eco.)
Mr. Wilson Ishaac	Mr. Muwaffaq Ridha (Elective)
Mr. Noel Azzawi	Miss Olga Ghanus (English)
Mr. Andrews A. Joseph	Dr. Oraybi al-Zawbayi (Math.)
Mr. Sanharib Shabbas	Mr. Peter Markho (Mechanics)
Dr. Faraj Abdulahad	Mr. Qais Fattah (Hydraulics)
Mr. Mumtaz Aziz Dinno	Dr. Rufail Rumaya (Concrete)
Miss Najat Raphael	Mr. Saleh Hadbai (Accounting)
Mr. Noel Emmanuel	Mr. Sami Andrea (Drawing)
Mr. Saadi Dabuni	Mr. Samuel Rumaya (Constr.)
Mr. Muwaffaq Simaani	Mr. Talib Mahmud Ali (Math.)
Mr. A-Fattah Chalmiran	Miss Vera Johnston (Marketing)
Miss Bushra Zabloq	Dr. Younathan Youash (Geology)
Miss Peruz Nishania	Mr. Yuhanna Aboona (Manag.)



**4. B.C. faculty & staff for the year 1967-68**

Fr. John A. Carty	Mr. Steve Kramer
Fr. Joseph D. Quinn	Mr. Edward McNamara
Fr. Edward J. Banks	Mr. Edmund Scanlon
Fr. Francis Belcher	Mr. Frank Sikora
Fr. Joseph T. Bennett	Mr. David Traverso
Fr. Neil F. Decker	Mr. Adil Shammani
Fr. Joseph G. Fennell	Mr. Ahmad Shahad
Fr. Joseph J. Flaucher	Mr. A-Razzaq al-Ubaidi
Fr. Laurence J. Foley	Mr. Abdulahad George
Fr. Stanislaus T. Gerry	Mr. Bashir Saffo
Fr. Kerry D. Holland	Mr. Elia Yacub
Fr. Thomas F. Hussey	Mr. Fadhil Dakkak
Fr. Edmund F. Kelly	Mr. Gabrial Shamsi
Fr. Thomas J. Kelly	Mr. George Abbosh
Fr. Charles M. Loeffler	Mr. Hamid Al-Ani
Fr. Joseph F. MacDonnell	Mr. Jamil Salim
Fr. Sidney M. MacNeil	Mr. Leonard Sayad
Fr. Charles W. Mahan	Mr. Manuel Abdulahad
Fr. John J. Mahoney	Mr. Mansur Gorial
Fr. John J. McCarthy	Mr. Metti Ibrahim
Fr. Joseph P. Merrick	Mr. Muhammad Ali Al-Bir
Fr. James F. Morgan	Mr. Muhammad Ali Hatif
Fr. James F. Mulcahy	Mr. Muhammad Al-Saadi
Fr. Joseph A. Paquet	Mr. Muhammad Hammadi
Br. Italo A. Parnoff	Mr. Naim Kitto
Fr. Walter R. Pelletier	Mr. Nasir Taqtaq
Fr. Harold R. Powers	Mr. Rammo Fattuhi
Fr. Robert F. Regan	Mr. Sabir Al-Atraqchi
Fr. Andrew J. Scopp	Mr. Sabri Mansur
Fr. Leo J. Shea	Mr. Sami Butti
Fr. Robert J. Sullivan	Mr. Shihab al-Hamdani
Fr. Walter J. Young	Mr. Tawfiq Askar
Mr. Michael Albin	Mr. Wilson Narsi
Mr. John Bruch	Mr. Yacub Esco
Mr. James Callahan	Mr. Yahya Nazhat
Mr. Edward Cooney	Mr. Yusuf Haddad
Mr. Carmen Fuccillo	



## Appendix D Notes to complement text: listed according to page

See page 18

Permit of the Iraq Minister of Education to open Baghdad College

**DOC # 4** Baghdad, Iraq 6/30/32

No. 3947 Date 30th June, 1932

To: Rev. William Rice, S.J., 11/45 Muraba Street, Baghdad

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter dated June 23rd, I have the pleasure to intimate you hereby our formal agreement to your opening a new School under the name of "Baghdad College" subject to the Educational Laws and Regulations in force of this Government. Wishing you every success in your enterprise and we trust that this College will do much to contribute for the promotion of education in this country.

Best wishes.

Yours faithfully,

Minister of Education.

See page 19

The Iraq-American Educational Association: **I.A.E.A.**

Know all men by these presents: that we, the undersigned, James M. Kilroy, James H. Dolan, W. Coleman Nevils, Edmund A. Walsh and Joseph A. Farrell, being persons of full age, all citizens of the United States of America and a majority citizens of the District of Columbia, do by these presents, under the provisions of sub-chapter 3 of Chapter 18 of the Code of laws for the District of Columbia, hereby organize ourselves into a body corporate for educational, benevolent, religious and literary purposes, and do certify as follows:

1. That the name of the Corporation is the Iraq-American Educational Association.

2. That the term for which it is organized is perpetual.

3. That the particular business and object of this Association are to sponsor and aid colleges and other institutions in the Kingdom of Iraq directly and through affiliation with similar foundations in the United States, and thus promote and advance their educational, spiritual and academic efficiency.

4. The number of Directors for the management of its business shall not be more than eight and for the first year of the existence of this Corporation and until their successors are

appointed, are:

The Presidents of the following Associated Colleges and Universities in the United States:

W. Coleman Nevils, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

Louis J. Gallagher, Boston College, Massachusetts.

John M. Fox, Holy Cross College, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Robert M. Kelley, Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois.

Robert S. Johnston, Saint Louis University, Missouri.

Edward J. Whelan, University of Detroit, Michigan.

John W. Hynes, Loyola University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

See page 21

## A 1956 description of 19 sections of Baghdad

Introduction: This description of the city of Baghdad is in the form of a survey, which sweeps down the east bank of the city and up the west bank. The purpose of the survey is to describe the various sections of the city.

1. Sulaikh, home of **Baghdad College** is the northernmost section of the city on the east bank of the river, and is partly inside and partly outside of the sadda (or dike). The village of Sulaikh, situated on the river, is a large cluster of mud huts inhabited by the very poor. The rest of Sulaikh is mostly residential, and inhabited by middle class people. "Camp Sulaikh" inside the dike is populated by poor Christians.

2. Adamiya lies south of Sulaikh: a section older than Sulaikh, more densely populated, and containing many shops.

3. Waziriya is a little south and east; an almost exclusively residential area containing fine homes of many wealthy Muslims as well as the consulates of many countries.

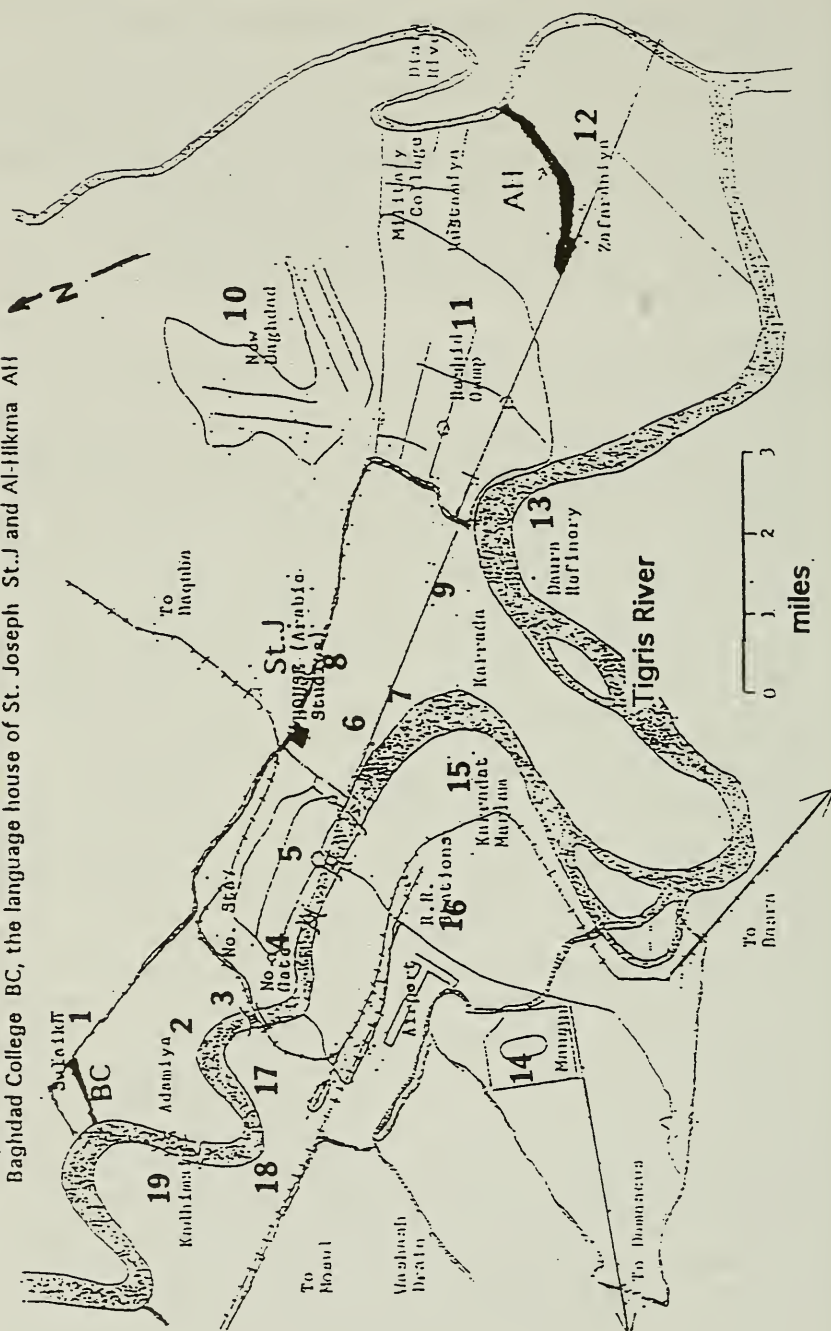
4. North Gate is the ancient northern entrance into the old city and was demolished in the 20's. North Gate is the center of bus traffic of the northern part of the city. In this area are located the Royal Hospital, the Government Colleges, the Foreign Office and the jail. Nearby is the Royal Palace.

5. The Old City lies between North and South Gates through which now run three important streets: Rashid St., Ghazi St., and Sheikh Omar St. Two bridges cross the river from this section, Faisal Bridge, the principal one, and Mamoun Bridge.

Rashid Street is Main Street. Between it and the river are situated the covered bazzars, Bank Street, the Ministry of Defense, Parliament, the Central Post Office, and many hotels.



Map of Baghdad in the fifties indicating the locations of the three Jesuit houses:  
Baghdad College BC, the language house of St. Joseph St.J and Al-Hikma AH



Between Rashid and Ghazi Streets is a maze of narrow alleys that is thickly settled. In one place, the Christian Quarter, are located the largest of the Catholic Churches, the Latin, Chaldean, Armenian and Syrian Cathedrals. Since the well-to-do Christians have left this area for the residential sections, especially Karradah, it is inhabited by mostly poor Christians and Muslims. Sheikh Omar Street is one long stretch of repair shops. The whole area is terribly crowded, noisy, disordered with giant the traffic problems.

6. South Gate marks the end of the old city on the eastern bank of the river, where are located many stores, offices, and cinemas. From here buses go in all directions. At present South Gate area is undergoing a great transformation due to the construction of a new bridge across the Tigris, which will make this district even more important.

7. Betaween lies below South Gate, where 30 years ago there were only date groves. The city has been growing steadily in an enormous development of residential areas. Betaween, which is closest to South Gate and is now densely inhabited.

8. Saadun is east and south of Betaween. Excellent wide avenues lead from South Gate to Karradah. While Saadun has some schools, government buildings and hospitals, it is mainly residential. In the northern end of Saadun, close to the dike, is located the Jesuit house of Arabic Studies, St. Joseph's.

9. Karradah Sharquia lies about two miles from South Gate and hosted the American Embassy, which was built in what is now a vast residential section of both the very rich and the middle class. A large number of the Americans live here. The whole area is well planned and beautiful.

Karradah is in a sense a Christian residential section. Christians are not the only ones who live here, but more Christians live here than in any other part of the city. In Karradah are the following Catholic churches: Greek, Syrian, Armenian, Chaldean and Latin churches which are all small and may seat roughly about 100 people.

10. New Baghdad lies southeast of South Gate. This is a private real estate venture on a rather large scale. It has been said that New Baghdad so far has not been as successful as was originally hoped. One difficulty is that it lies outside the dike, so that the flood waters of the Tigris cause great damage.

11. Rashid Camp is a large site occupied by the Iraqi Army and lies southeast of Karradah. South is Rustamiya.

12. Zafaraniya, home chosen for Al-Hikma is an expanse of farm land south of the military camp on the road to Basra.



13. Daura is the new Government Oil Refinery which is situated opposite Karradah. There is a main artery coming down from the city, river frontage, and large plots of land.

14. Mansur City lies north of the Basrah Railroad and along the Tigris. This block of land, with a race track in the center and homes around it, is a successful private real estate venture, that has already attracted many other private homeowners to the district. The road to the west (to Jordan etc.) passes by Mansur and goes through Abu Graib, where the Government Agricultural School and Experimental Station are located, about 25 minute rides from Faisal Bridge.

15. Karradat Mariam is a residential section where now the new Palace and the new Parliament buildings are being erected. The French and Iranian Embassies are situated here.

16. Baghdad West covers that area on the west bank bounded by Karradat Mariam, Karkh, and Mansur City. Here are the Mosul and Basra stations.

17. Karkh lies north and close to Faisal Bridge; it is a crowded and disordered district of houses and shops.

18. Shal chiya, once occupied by the English Army camp, is an open, dusty section, hitherto not much developed. Besides the tremendous customs sheds, pleasant homes have been built along the river; there are now two huge modern textile factories, date packing and brick factories.

19. Kadhimain is an ancient crowded district, famous for its magnificent mosque and teeming with shops and stores. According to the 1947 census, the population here then was 113,650. It boasted of a pontoon bridge.

### See page 25

The Massacre in Fiesh Khaboor (Pesh Kapur) written on the occasion of a demonstration to celebrate the victory of the Government troops over the Assyrians.

Doubtless, since the matter was aired at Geneva, the facts are sufficiently well known to the outside world to make unnecessary any lengthy exposition of events on our part . . . and we wish to remind you, too, that the *Al Baghdadi* is not a political journal and has no desire to give any offense to the parties concerned in the dispute by the recital of atrocities, real or alleged. Our attitude is rather that of the historian, and where the knowledge of the facts is doubtful, we shall not hesitate to confess our ignorance.

Historians of old were wont to begin their works with the



creation of the world. We shall be content to go back only a few thousand years. At that time the inhabitants of Mesopotamia (or Iraq) were known as Assyrians in the north and Chaldeans in the south. For our present purpose we are not interested in their predecessors, nor have our studies in ethnology been sufficiently deep or accurate to say how far these two peoples were related. Suffice it to say that with the lapse of centuries and at the present time the name Chaldeans has come to be reserved for those of the above-named peoples who are Catholics, with a special rite of their own. The name Assyrians is applied to the followers of Nestorius (a Syrian bishop of the fifth century who held that there were two persons in Christ, the Divine and the human). The Chaldeans, therefore, are Catholics, and the Assyrians are Nestorians. The nomenclature is consequently more religious than ethnological.

Before the war, the Assyrians lived for the most part on the northern side of the mountains which now form the boundary between Turkey and Iraq.

When peace and quiet had once more settled on the country after the imbroglio of the great war, and the ensuing disturbances that arose in the endeavor to settle peoples and divide boundaries according to everyone's satisfaction had quieted down, there came the question of a permanent settlement for the refugee Assyrians. It was not surprising that Turkey should refuse to admit them back into her territory, and pourparlers were begun with a view to finding them land for a permanent settlement in northern Iraq.

The head of the Assyrian nation, if it may now be said to have a head at all, is the Patriarch Mar Shimoon, a young man of about 26. He held out for an enclave of Iraqi territory which would enable his people to settle as a unit and allow himself to exercise to some extent the jurisdiction, both spiritual and, to an extent which we do not care to define, temporal. The Iraq Government did not feel that it could grant the claims of the Patriarch, and something of an impasse followed. Initially the Government obtained the services of one whose experience qualified him to deal with such matters, Major Thompson by name, and asked him to try to arrange a settlement. He came to Iraq for that purpose in the first part of the present year.

Negotiations had been proceeding for some time, when Mar Shimoon was summoned from Mosul to Baghdad and made to understand that his presence in the north was considered to have an obstructive influence by reason of his attitude towards the negotiations, and he was requested to remain in Baghdad for



the nonce. He took up his residence at the local Y.M.C.A.

Not long after this, several hundred Assyrians (most of whom possessed rifles which they had brought from their service with the British by previous agreement) crossed the Tigris and entered Syria under the leadership of one Yaku. What their purpose was in this it is difficult to say, for they were soon wanting to return. The Iraq Government informed them that they could do so only on condition that they surrendered their rifles. The Assyrians objected that they would thereafter be an easy prey to the Kurds, their traditional enemies. At all events, the Assyrians did re-cross the Tigris into Iraqi territory in the early part of August, near the little town of Pesh Kabur. They were met by Iraqi troops. A shot was fired, and that was the beginning of hostilities. How many were lost on both sides then and afterwards, whether of combatants or non-combatants, we personally do not know. Suffice it to say that any hostile intentions which the Assyrians may have entertained, were quickly and decisively frustrated by the Government troops, aided by Kurdish mercenaries.

Today Mar Shimoon with his family is in Cyprus, where he was brought from Baghdad by a British airplane. Attempts to find a home for the Assyrians in other parts of the world have thus far been fruitless. Criticism of the British Government has appeared in English papers and magazines because, in the words of her critics, "Britain has failed our smallest ally." For a fuller account of the events which we have related, we refer you (without assuming responsibility for their accuracy) to *Time* for August 28. (Madaras, 1936, p.172-5)

See page 27

The first advertisement of B.C.

A.M.D.G.

THE HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT of BAGHDAD COLLEGE  
Announces The OPENING OF CLASSES SEPT. 26, 1932

Gilani St. (Murabavah St.) Baghdad

THE HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT of BAGHDAD COLLEGE

The High School Department of Baghdad College will open classes on Monday Sept. 26th, 1932, for a limited number of boys who are prepared to enter the fifth and sixth grades of the Primary School and the first and second classes of the Secondary School. The founding of this new school is due partly to the long and earnest prayers of the laity, the clergy and especially to the tender solicitude of His Holiness, Pius XI,

and especially to the tender solicitude of His Holiness, Pius XI, for the people of the Orient. This solicitude has been made manifest on more than one occasion during the past few years, and if further proof were needed, we have it in his decision to open a school in Baghdad this present year. The care of the school he confided to the General of the Society of Jesus, who in turn entrusted it to the American Fathers of the same Society. Eight American Colleges and Universities have been formed into a corporation with the name. "Iraq-American Education Association," incorporated under the laws of Washington, D.C. for the purpose of sponsoring and promoting colleges and other institutions of learning in the Kingdom of Iraq. The College will be a day school for the present and it will be conducted on the same lines as the three hundred other schools and educational institutions of the Society of Jesus throughout the world are conducted.

See page 27 DOC # 5 in the New England Jesuit archives

In the name of the Iraq-American Education Association Fr. Rice purchased the 25 acres of land at Sulaikh for ID 2,181 (at that time equal to \$10,228) on 27 June, 1934.

See page 27

A. M. D. G.

كلية بغداد

NAME الاسم		BAGHDAD COLLEGE												CLASS الصف												
Year السنة	الدين	Religion	اللغة العربية	Arabic	اللغة الانكليزية	English	الرياضيات	Mathematics	الرياضيات	Mathematics	التاريخ	History	الجغرافيا	Geography	الفيزياء	Physics	الكيمياء	Chemistry	البيولوجيا	Biology	الغياب	Absence	التأخر	Tardiness	اسم الوالدين	Parent's Signature
19	١٩																									
19	١٩																									
الجزء - تشرين الأول																										
تشرين الثاني																										
كانون الأول (٢٥)																										
شباط																										
أذار - نيسان																										
مايار																										
سنة																										
Year																										

NOTICE TO PARENTS :— Parents are requested to attend to the following :

1. Please see to it yourself that your boy studies at home at least two hours in preparation for each school day. This is essential for his success in class and for the acquisition of the habit of industrious, efficient study.
2. Kindly read this report carefully. If your boy's marks are not satisfactory, please find out the reason. A visit or letter of inquiry to the school office is always welcome.
3. Please sign and return this report, which is sent shortly after the month indicated.
4. Below 55 in an individual subject is failure; below 60 in the general average is failure. Final grades are given on ..... Fifth Year students who are below 60 in the general average or below 55 in two or more Fifth Year subjects are failures for the year, and their names will not be presented for the government examinations.



**See page 60**

Sons of prominent Iraqi citizens who attended Baghdad College

**PRIME MINISTERS:**

Abdul Rahman al-Gailani	grandson, Abdul-Rahman
Abdul Muhsin al-Saadun	grandnephew, Nasir
Jafar al-Askari	nephew, Nahidh Askari
Tawfig al-Suwaiddi	son, Luay
Naji al-Suwaiddi	son, Nezih
Nuri al-Said	two grandsons, Usam & Falah
Naji Shawkat	son, Harith
Jamil al-Midfai	son, Saad - grandson, Nabil
Ali Jawdat	son, Namir
Hikmat Sulaiman	two sons, Muhain & Ibrahim
Hamdi al-Pachachi	son, Abdul-Wahab
Mustafa al Umari	son, Mukarrim
Nurruddin Mahmud	son, Duraid
Muhammad Sadr	grandson, Jafar
Fadhil Jamali	son, Usama

**CABINET MEMBERS:**

H.E. Tawfig al-Suwaiddi	Prime Minister
H.E. Jamil Midfai	ex-Prime Minister
Umar Nadhmi	Minister of Justice
Tawfiq Wahbi	ex-Min. of Social Affairs
Youssef Ibrahim	ex-Minister of Education
Mustafa Majid	ex-Minister
Jamal Baban	ex-Minister of Justice
Jalal Baban	ex-Min. of Defense
Naji Shawkat	ex-Prime Minister
Yusuf Ghanima	ex-Minister of Finance
Sami Shawkat	ex-Min. of Social Affairs
Tahsin Askary	ex-Minister of Interior
Hikmat Sulaiman	ex-Prime Minister
Ali Jowdat al-Ayubi	ex-P. M & Amb. to Wash.

**SENATORS and REPRESENTATIVES:**

Hazim Shemdin	Baqir Shabibi	Rauf Allos
Hamid Jaf	Ahmad Uthman	Rufail Butty
Salim Hassun	Jafar al-Hamandi	Munir Abbas
Yaqub Murad	Razzuq Ghannam	Izzet Ossman

**NEWSPAPER EDITORS:**

Selim Hausan	AL-ALEMM AL-ARABI
Rufail Butty	AL-BILAD
Jibran Melcon	AL-AKHBAR
Kamil al-Chederchi	SAUT AL-AHALI
Yousif Hermiz Jammo	SAUT AL-SHA'AB
Sami Shawkat	BA'ATH AL-QAWMI

**See page 116**

Baghdad College - Secondary Math Contest for Dec. 1966

30 minutes: Score range from -15 to +60

Do as many problems as you can and put the answer in the Box beneath the number of the problem.

Don't guess: points are deducted for wrong answers.

1. Find the roots of  $x(x^2 + 8x + 16)(4 - x) = 0$ .
2. Reduce the Fraction  $\frac{[\{\sqrt{a^2+x^2}-(a^2+x^2)\}]/\sqrt{a^2+x^2}]{\sqrt{a^2+x^2}}}{\sqrt{a^2+x^2}}$
3. Find the number of revolutions of a wheel, with fixed center and with an outside diameter of 6 feet, required to cause a point on the rim to go one mile.
4. The diameters of two circles are 8 inches and 12 inches respectively. Find the ratio of the area of the smaller to the area of the larger circle.
5. A triangle and a trapezoid are equal in area and have the same altitude. If the base of the triangle is 18 inches, find the median of the trapezoid.
6. Find the factors of  $x^4 + 4$ .
7. Find the value of  $x$  if  $\log_{10} (x^2-3x+6)=1$
8. Find the value of  $\log_3$  27 times  $(9 \cdot 25 \text{ times } 9 \cdot 33)$
9. The radius of the first circle is 1, that of the second is .5, that of the third is .25 and so on indefinitely. Find the sum of the areas of the circles.
10. The perimeter of an isosceles right triangle is  $2p$ . Find area.
11. The ratio of the areas of two concentric circles is 1:3. If the radius of the smaller is  $r$ , then find an approximation of the difference between the radii.
12. Find the value of  $3/(a+b)$  when  $a = 4$  and  $b = -4$ .
13. If  $\log x - 5 \log 3 = -2$ , Find  $x$ .
14. Find the roots of the equation  $x^2 + 2x\sqrt{3} + 3 = 0$
15. Represent the hypotenuse of a right triangle by  $c$  and the area by  $A$ . Find the altitude on the hypotenuse.



See page 120

### Examples of Government Secondary Exams

#### Solid & Analytic Geometry Exam for June 1961

1. Prove - the projection on a plane of a line is a straight line.
- 2 ) The generatrix of a right circular cone is twice the altitude. It is equivalent to a rt. circular cylinder whose base equals the base of the cone. Prove that the lateral area of the cylinder is one third the lateral area of the cone.
- 3 ) Line AB is oblique to plane Y, and meets Y at point B. Find the locus of the feet of all the perpendiculars, that can be drawn from A to a straight line drawn through B and lying in plane Y.
- 4 ) OX, OY, OZ are three lines not all in the same plane. How do you draw a line through O making equal angles with these three lines. Prove your construction correct.
- 5 ) Prove a plane parallel to a pyramid's base cuts the pyramid.
- 6 ) Find the equation of the perpendicular bisector of the straight line joining  $(-3, 1)$  and  $(5, -3)$ . Draw diagram.
- 7) Prove  $(3, 5), (-6, -1), (-1, -3), (8, 3)$  is a parallelogram.

#### Trigonometry & Algebra Exam for June 1965

1. If the difference between the squares of the roots of the equation  $4x^2 - 17x + c = 0$  is  $3\frac{3}{16}$  find c.
2. Solve the equation  $2^{2x+2} + 4^{1-x} = 17$
3. If the fourth, fifth and sixth terms of the binomial  $(1 + x)^8$  form an arithmetic series, find x.
4. Solve the following equation, finding all values of x between  $0^\circ$  and  $360^\circ$   $\cos 4x - 2 \cos x + \cos 2x = 0$
5. Points A & B were observed from the top of a tower of height 60m. It has found that the angle of depression of A was  $45^\circ$  and of B.  $30^\circ$ . If A is in a direction  $S 33^\circ W$  from the base of the tower and B is  $S 57^\circ E$  from the base, and if A & B are in the same plane as the base of the tower, what is the distance between A and B?
6. A, B, C, D are all positive numbers. Prove that if  $A/B > C/D$  then  $C/D < (A^2 + C^2)/(B^2 + D^2) < A/B$
7. The sum of an infinite geometrical series is 4, and the sum of the cubes of the terms of this series is 192. Find the series.
8. A man takes out an insurance policy. He agrees to pay the insurance company 60 dinars at the end of each year for 15 years. Immediately after the 15th payment the company will give him 1000 dinars. If however he should die before the end of the 15 years, the company will pay his wife 1000 dinars no matter how few payments he has made. Actually he died after ten years. What did the company gain or lose? Use 5% compound interest.
9. Prove that  $(1 + \sin c)/(1 - \sin c) = \tan^2(45^\circ + c/a)$
10. Find the largest angle in the triangle whose sides are 9 cm, 6 cm, 12 cm. Also find the area of this triangle if  $\sec 75^\circ 31' = 4$



**Government Secondary Physics Exam for June 1966**

1. a. Does air resistance have any effect on the acceleration of falling bodies? If so, how? Give two factors which increase this resistance and explain one of them using an example.

b. An object is thrown up a smooth inclined plane. It travels 96 ft during the second and third seconds of motion and 8 ft during the fifth second. Find the angle of inclination of the plane and the initial velocity.

2. a. Explain why: i. If a bullet strikes a sheet of glass it pierces it but if a stone strikes a sheet of glass, the glass shatters. ii. If air confined under pressure is allowed to expand, the temperature decreases. iii. People are forbidden to stand on the upper level of a two level bus.

b. One end 'A' of a uniform meter stick whose mass is 250 grams is fastened by a hinge to a wall so that it is free to rotate. From a point on the wall above A a string goes down to the other end of the meter stick 'B'. The system is in equilibrium when the meter stick makes an angle of  $30^\circ$  with the wall and the string makes an angle of  $60^\circ$  with the wall. Find the tension in the string and the reaction of the hinge on the stick and its direction.

3. a. Explain a method of determining the frequency of a tuning fork in the laboratory.

b. Find the power of an engine which throws 3960 lbs. of water per minute with a velocity of 80 ft/sec if 20% of the work is expended in overcoming resistance.

4. a. Explain why: i. Gases have two specific heats whereas liquids have but one. Show which of the two specific heats is larger and explain why. ii. One of the results of the presence of water vapor in the air is to prevent changes in temperature. iii. Copper screens are used in miners' safety lamps.

b. A flask holds one liter when it is filled with Hg at 80 C. Find the mass of Hg to be added to fill the flask at 20 C. The coefficient of expansion for Hg is  $0.000162/^\circ\text{C}$  and the coefficient for glass is  $0.0000085/^\circ\text{C}$ . The density of Hg at 0 C is 13.6 g/cc.

5. a. Explain why and by diagrams show the light rays:

i. for the formation of mirages in hot countries.

ii. for the 3 images formed by an object in 2 plane mirrors.

b. If the vertex angle of a triangular prism is  $30^\circ$  and the index of refraction of the glass is  $2/(\sqrt{3} - 1)$ .

6. a. Define: Magnetic unit pole, null point, volt and ohm.

b. Find the V if the number of turns of primary coil = 20, and secondary = 1000 turns:  $V = 110$ ;  $R = 20,000$ .



See page 149 Finances in the 30's

1940 letter from Mission to Province treasurer relates:

Apart from building expenses, our annual expenses have remained remarkably similar from year to year despite the increase in the number of the community. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that we spend very little here on food, clothing, and incidentals for the community, so that adding a few men to our numbers makes no really appreciable difference in our expenses. You may be interested to see the annual receipts and expenses since 32-33. The cost of the school and dormitory are not included in the above. Here are the figures in Iraqi dinars. [ One ID {dinar} = \$4.67]

Year	Receipts	Expenses
1932-33	14892.427	7118.614
1933-34	1387.074	5916.571
1934-35	1781.214	4700.631
1935-36	5235.522	4422.767
1936-37	3569.447	3975.552
1937-38	4743.399	4417.063
1938-39	5113.949	4936.078

It will be seen from the above that, omitting the first year which was exceptional, our average annual expenses amount to - 4803.773. That makes about 400 dinars a month we need to run the place, the additional expenses of the boarding school being balanced by the money we save on rent. If we figure our income as 1800 from Board and Tuition, 800 from Gifts, 500 from Mass stipends, and 400 from Sundry Receipts here, we have a total of 3500, leaving a balance of from 1300 to 1500 to be made up. The time when we are most in need of money is from May to September included, since we get very little during that time, practically nothing coming in from the students. During that time we must lay in supplies for the coming year, pay the fare of the men going home, continue to pay salaries (since we can't fire the men each year), and meet, other expenses that run whether school keeps or not.

**See page 149 Finances**

An example of an itemized annual statement for the receipts and expenses of the fiscal year 1937-1938 in Dinars:

One ID {dinar} = \$4.69.

The figures are rather hard to believe today and indicate a somewhat Spartan existence.

On the next page (306) are found the monthly statements for the same year, and indicate more clearly a precarious financial status.

After this on the following page (307) is found an example from later years (1965-1966) to indicate that while the numbers are higher, the margin of profit loss is no less precarious. By this time (1965-66) the value had changed so that one Iraqi dinar (ID) = \$3.38.

**SAGHDAD COLLEGE 1937 - 1939 ANNUAL STATEMENT**  
**Receipts**

(Monetary unit is the dinar = 1000 fils = \$4.69)  
**Expenses**

July 1 to June 30	1937-38	1938-39
Balance July 1, 1937	312.399	268.336
N. E. Jesuit Missions	880.000	1480.000
Building Fund	1247.506	3240.327
Interest	300.000	
Perquisites	11.000	48.000
Stipends	418.370	433.766
Refunds (including Loan)	778.465	287.649
Gifts	938.649	1093.567
Tuition		423.060
1179.600		
Students' Sundries	36.959	125.015
Science Fees	33.000	24.400
Publications	42.228	13.570
Farm, Garden	109.120	67.050
Cafeteria	154.235	68.397
Bookstore	132.000	86.761
Propagation/Faith		9.147
Buses	149.050	108.514
Apostleship Prayer		1.250
Sodality	11.463	8.636
Exchange Gains	<u>13.401</u>	<u>78.627</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>I.D. 4743.399</b>	<b>9870.118</b>

July 1 to June 30	1937-38	1938-39
Food and Beverages	597.403	481.472
Clothing and Laundry	124.471	106.857
Furniture/Furnishings	169.549	187.801
Travel, Auto, Freight	549.572	767.152
Fuel, Light, and Water	122.114	109.800
Library and Periodicals	146.058	109.304
Postage, Printing	100.829	67.953
Masses Sent	58.000	38.500
Boarding School		587.881
Church Expenses	14.841	38.500
Salaries	402.500	414.500
Wages	678.313	844.190
Villa	125.396	63.212
Students' Sundries	16.045	7.800
Science Apparatus	23.558	27.404
School Equipment	80.000	6.000
Farm, Garden, etc.	96.262	88.038
Alms	41.750	25.700
Repairs/Improvements	99.779	228.028
Cafeteria	120.935	54.726
Bookstore	213.700	65.258
Buses	145.682	165.886
Rent	275.000	175.000
Sundries	193.539	246.018
Exchange Loss	1.985	10.046
Sodality	19.782	22.362
New construction		3277.647
House & dorm fund		1592.583
Purchases for Personnel	<u>58.000</u>	<u>100.00</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>I.D. 4475.063</b>	<b>9869.705</b>
7/1/38 Balance	<u>I.D. 268.336</u>	<u>413</u>



## See page 149 Finances

Summary of the monthly receipts and expenses for 1937-1938.

July 1	House Balance	312.399	Nov 1	House Balance	297.229
	Building Fund	4802.073		Building Fund	2883.311
31	Receipts	<u>903.746</u>	30	Receipts	<u>517.436</u>
		6018.218			3697.976
July 31	House Expenses	410.292	Nov 30	House Expenses	273.423
	New Construct.	7.100		New Construct.	60.750
	Total Balance	<u>5600.826</u>		Total Balance	<u>3363.803</u>
		6018.218			3697.976
Aug. 1	House Balance	805.853	Dec 1	House Balance	541.242
	Building Fund	4794.973		Building Fund	2822.561
31	Receipts	<u>89.739</u>	31	Receipts	<u>506.077</u>
		5690.565			3869.880
Aug 31	House Expenses	302.382	Dec 31	House Expenses	489.736
	New Construct.	994.906		New Construct.	613.200
	Total Balance	<u>4393.277</u>		Total Balance	<u>2766.944</u>
		5690.565			3869.880
Sept 1	House Balance	593.210	Jan 1	House Balance	557.583
	Building Fund	3800.067		Building Fund	2209.361
30	Receipts	<u>100.402</u>	31	Receipts	<u>213.555</u>
		4493.679			2980.499
Sept 30	House Expenses	234.565	Jan 31	House Expenses	347.018
	New Construct.	710.805		New Construct.	213.388
	Total Balance	<u>3548.309</u>		Total Balance	<u>2420.093</u>
		4493.679			2980.499
Oct 1	House Balance	459.047	Feb 1	House Balance	424.120
	Building Fund	3089.262		Building Fund	1995.973
31	Receipts	<u>271.140</u>	28	Receipts	<u>463.141</u>
		3819.449			2883.234
Oct 31	House Expenses	432.958	Feb 28	House Expenses	323.763
	New Construct.	205.951		New Construct.	<u>55.054</u>
	Total Balance	<u>3180.540</u>		Total Balance	2883.234
	I.D.	3819.449	Mar 1	House Balance	443.498
				Building Fund	2060.919

3 / 1 / 3 8

One ID {dinar} = \$4.69.

Total rec. 8 months	2945.236
Balance on 7/1/37	<u>312.399</u>
Total	I.D. 3257.635
Total expenses	<u>2814.137</u>
House Balance	I.D. 443.498

**See page 149 Finances**

Financial statement (in Iraqi Dinars ID) for 7/1/65 to 6/30/66

Income		Expenses	
Prerequisites	118.000	Food-Frs	7664.720
Stipends	2732.816	Food-Boarders	2908.433
Refunds	3695.852	Laundry	676.180
Gifts	1182.154	Furniture	1209.240
Board & Tuition	52636.780	Travel/Telep	5521.676
Student Sundries	519.915	Freight/Customs	271.565
Bookstore	4897.693	Elec//Fuel	2098.264
De Prop Fidei	154.648	Library	1409.183
Poor Collections	303.900	Postage/Print	761.939
Al Iraqi	1857.695	Church	58.340
Buses	9680.800	Salaries	15860.780
Church	119.214	Wages	11929.356
Sodality	<u>5.500</u>	Stud Sundry	887.263
		Garden	676.400
		Alms	908.079
		Repairs	1117.661
		Bookstore	2608.555
		Buses	2111.935
		Sundries	2102.970
		Medicine/Doctor	452.578
		Villa	933.251
		School Equip	1567.619
		Science "	609.431
		Al Iraqi	1693.051
		Poor Distrib	275.000
		Saadun Tax	2900.000
one Iraqi dinar (ID) = \$3.38.		Lay Apos Food	525.000
		Lay Apos Varia	4126.567
		De Prop Fidei	175.835
		Apos of Prayer	134.804
		Masses Sent	<u>612.242</u>
Total	ID 77905.00	Total	ID 74786.917
+ <u>NET ASSETS - JANUARY 1, 1967</u>			ID 45,864.679
			<u>ID 4,642.857</u>

(\$13,000. interest in USA)

Total ID 50,507.536

+ Exclusive of Ford Grants of 1963 and 1965



See page 158

Documents concerning the beginning of Al-Hikma  
Doc 28, 31, 36, 37,57 and 63

These documents concern I.A.E.A., the establishment of Al-Hikma, the granting of land, the naming of the university and finally the disposition of the property in case of the dissolution of the school. The documents (DOC) are so numbered in the Province archives and usually according to date.

**DOC # 28** Translation of No. 27 6/8/55

Concerning the approval of the Iraqi American Educational Association in Baghdad by the Council of Education Association in Baghdad by the Council of Ministers as an association for the public benefit.

No. 8570 Ministry of Interior Date: June 8, 1955

The Iraqi American Educational Association in Baghdad

Subject: **Consideration of the Association as one of public benefit**

In reference to your letter dated 28th of December 1954,  
We give below a copy of the letter of the head office of the Council of Ministers No. 2343 and dated 1st of June 1955 concerning this subject for your information.

(Signed/ for Minister of Interior)

Copy to:-

Ministry of Education

Ministry of Social Affairs - Department of Social Services.

General Police Department

All offices of Mutasarrifs

Amanat al-Asima.

Copy of the Letter To: The Ministry of the Interior

Subject: Consideration of an Association as one of public benefit at the sixty-sixth meeting of the Council of Ministers held on the 22nd of May 1955, your letter No. 6880 and dated 8/7/55 (along with the attached papers) was read. In this letter it was suggested to consider the Iraqi American Educational Association in Baghdad as one of public benefit since this association is directed to the public benefit.

After the discussion of opinions and after hearing the explanations of the Minister of Interior, the Council approved the suggestion and agreed upon it basing its decision upon paragraph A of Article 13 of the law of Associations No. 19 for the year 1954. The royal approval upheld this decision.

Munir al Qadhi Head of Office

**See page 158**

**Doc 31 9/13/55**

Translation of No. 31 -- approval by the Ministry of the Interior of an amendment to our constitutions enabling the association to accept government lands.

Iraq Ministry of Interior Directorate of Rights Baghdad  
No. 13449 Date: 9/13/55 A.D.

To: The President

Iraq American Educational Association in Baghdad

Topic: - Amendment of the Articles of the Association.

With reference to your letter dated 10-9-1955, we approve the amendment made in the articles of your association according to your letter dated 31-8-1955.

Signed (on behalf of the Minister of Interior)

Copy to: --

The Ministry of Finance

(General Directorate of Properties and Lands)

and reference made to the two letters noted above.

**DOC # 36 May 5, 1955 Translation of No. 35**

**Permit to undertake higher studies, granted by Ministry of Education.**

Translation of letter of Iraq Ministry of Education granting Baghdad College permission to open a four-year course of higher education.

- Translation by Fr. Richard J. McCarthy, S.J., May, 1955  
No. 15020 Very Urgent

Ministry of Education 5/5/1955

General Directorate of Education

Directorate of Technical Affairs

to - the Reverend President of Baghdad College

After greetings

Reference is made to your letter D/N/90, dated 4/27/55

The Ministry has studied the proposals contained in your letter referred to above, and has approved the first clause, viz. the conducting of higher studies in your College, and (has approved) the second clause, viz. instituting courses which will last four years and comprise programs of broad study in business and scientific subject leading to the attainment of a bachelor's degree in business and science.

The Ministry reserves its right regarding the third clause, viz. the conferring of the academic diplomas and degrees which are usually conferred in the different grades of higher instruction, including (in that reservation) the conferring of the Bachelor's degrees in business and science, which has been



mentioned in the second clause, until a complete course will be finished and the Ministry will have ascertained the measure of success and progress which these courses will achieve. It is also the view of the Ministry that the scientific field which your College will institute shall include higher studies in Physics, Chemistry, and Engineering, on the condition that you will have recourse to us before initiating the preparations necessary for these studies (informing us), about the faculty and scientific laboratories which will enable you to undertake (accomplish) this important affair.

While wishing you continual progress, I beg you to accept my thanks and esteem

Khalil Kanna

Minister of Education

copies to: the Directorate of Secondary Education  
the Directorate of Educational Relations (\*)

**DOC # 37      Sept. 19, 1955 Royal Decree # 785**  
**granting to the Iraq American Educational**  
**Association in Baghdad 200 donums of government**  
**land as a free gift for the purpose of erecting a**  
**building for higher education.** This Royal Decree  
appears in the official government publications, THE IRAQ  
GAZETTE, # 3695, of Sept. 19, 1955.

Excerpt from THE IRAQ GAZETTE, No. 3695, Sept. 19, 1955  
Royal Decree -- No. 785

After a study of the first paragraph of the twenty-third article of the ASASI Law (basic constitutions of Iraq laws), and in virtue of the third article which regulates the transference of ownership of government buildings and arasat, and in accordance with the authority conferred on us, we have issued this royal decree on behalf of His Majesty, King Faisal II.

Following the recommendation of the Minister of Finance and the approval of the Council of Ministers, we give to the Iraq American Association in Baghdad ownership without fee of an area of 200 donums from the Treasury's share in the piece of Miri Land Granted In Lezma (number 4, section (2 - Zafarana)) for the purpose of erecting buildings for higher studies and for expansion.

The Minister of Finance will execute this decree.

Written in Baghdad on the 22nd day of the month of Muharram, 1375, which corresponds to Sept. 10, 1955.

Acting in place of the King \_\_\_\_\_ Z A I D

Khalil Kanna

Acting Minister of Finance

Muhammad Ali Mahmud

Acting Prime Minister

See page 158

**DOC # 44**

Royal Irada, No. 230, of March 7, 1956, granting to the Iraq American Educational Association 72 donums and 75C square meters of land.

Iraq Gazette, April 16, 1956, No. 3785, page 4. #230

We, Faisal II, King of Iraq,

In accordance with article 3 of the Law of Ownership of lands and buildings belonging to the Government, and according to what was submitted by the Minister of Finance and was approved by the Council of Ministers, have issued our Royal Irada.

The endowment of the Iraq American Educational Association in Baghdad with the grant of an area of 72 donums and 750 square meters remaining from the Treasury's portion of a piece numbered 1/4, district 2, Zafarania, to erect buildings for the purpose of starting higher studies.

It is for the Minister of Finance to fulfill this decree. Written in Baghdad on the twenty-fourth day of Rejab, 1375, the seventh day of March, 1956.

Faisal

Nuri al-Said Prime Minister

Khalil Kanna Minister of Finance

**DOC # 57**

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR NO. 8286

BAGHDAD

Directorate of Right Date 29/5/1956

Iraqi-American Educational Association, Baghdad

Subject: **Amendment of Association's Constitution**

With reference to your registered letter to us, dated 16/5/1956:

1. We approve the current amendments of your constitution, with the exception of paragraph 14 which was added thereto.

2. It is to be noted that article 14, added to paragraph 13 in your supplement to the above-mentioned letter, included the permission to transfer the property of the Association, after its dissolution, to associations (whether inside Iraq or outside) that are similar in aims (and purposes). This is the permission decreed in Article 13 of your Association's Constitution. We did not touch upon this (article) in our letter granting the permission for the establishment of the Association, despite our knowledge of it, since it is impossible of realization, because it does not decide a definite way for the distribution of the Association's property, in the eventuality of



its dissolution, as though the appointed direction for distribution were indefinite.

In accordance with what preceded, and in keeping with the decrees of article 22 of the Law of Associations, No. 63, 1955, the property of your Association, in the eventuality of its dissolution, must be transferred to an association that approximates it in purposes; and, since the association to which this transference is intended is one incorporated in Iraq, in accordance with the above-mentioned Law of Associations, we ask you to delete out the phrase ("or outside") from the article in question, since it may be considered extraneous.

(signed) Minister of Interior

**DOC # 62 NO. 24057 DATE; 9/6/1956**

Concerning: **the naming of the university**

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL OF EDUCATION

Department of Personnel for Higher Institutes

The President of Baghdad College,

With reference to your letter dated 30/5/1956, we agree to the naming of the university, which we gave you permission to open, by the name Al-Hikma University of Baghdad. We also agree to the appointment of Father Joseph L. Ryan as its Dean.

(signed) Minister of Education

Munir Al-Qadhi

Copy to Directorate of Personnel

# 67 Permanent title deed of the Iraq-American Educational Association to 200 donums (500,000 sq. m.) of land at Zafarania, Baghdad.

{200 donums, 500,000 sq. m., circa 124 acres.}

{1 donum equals 2500 sq. m. or 5/8 acres.}

See page 178

# 13 p. Curricula from the 1960 Catalogue pp. 30-34

#### **Bachelor of Science in Business Administration**

First Semester	Hours	Second Semester	Hours
<b>Freshman Year</b>			
Arabic 1	3	Arabic 2	3
Economics 1	3	Economics 2	3
English 1 or 3	3	English 2 or 4	3
History 1	3	History 2	3
Mathematics 1	3	Mathematics 2	3
Theology 1	2	Theology 2	2

**Sophomore Year**

Accounting 21	4	Accounting 22	4
Arabic 21	3	Arabic 22	3
Economics 21	3	Economics 22	3
English 21 or 23	3	English 22 or 24	3
Logic Phil. 21	3	Metaph I Phil. 22	3
Theology 21	2	Theology 22	2

**Junior Year**

Accounting 51	3	Accounting 52	3
Business Law 51	3	Business Law 52	3
Statistics 51	3	Finance 52	3
Management 53	3	Management 54	3
Metaph II Phil. 51		4 Metaph III Phil. 52	4
Theology 41	2	Theology 42	2

**Senior Year**

Accounting 61	3	Accounting 62	3
Marketing 55	3	Management 59	3
Psych Phil. 53	3	Psych Phil. 54	3
G Ethics Phil. 61	3	S Ethics Phil. 62	3
Management 56	3	Management 57	3
Theology 61	2	Theology 62	2

**Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics**

First Semester	Hours	Second Semester	Hours
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**Freshman Year**

Arabic 1	3	Arabic 2	3
Mathematics 3	3	Mathematics 4	3
English 1 or 3	3	English 2 or 4	3
Physics 11	4	Physics 12	4
Chemistry 11	4	Chemistry 12	4
Theology 1	2	Theology 2	2

**Sophomore Year**

Drawing 11	4	Surveying 12	4
English 21 or 23	3	English 22 or 24	3
Logic Phil. 21	3	Metaph I Phil. 22	3
Mathematics 21	3	Mathematics 22	3
Physics 21	4	Physics 22	4
Theology 21	2	Theology 22	2

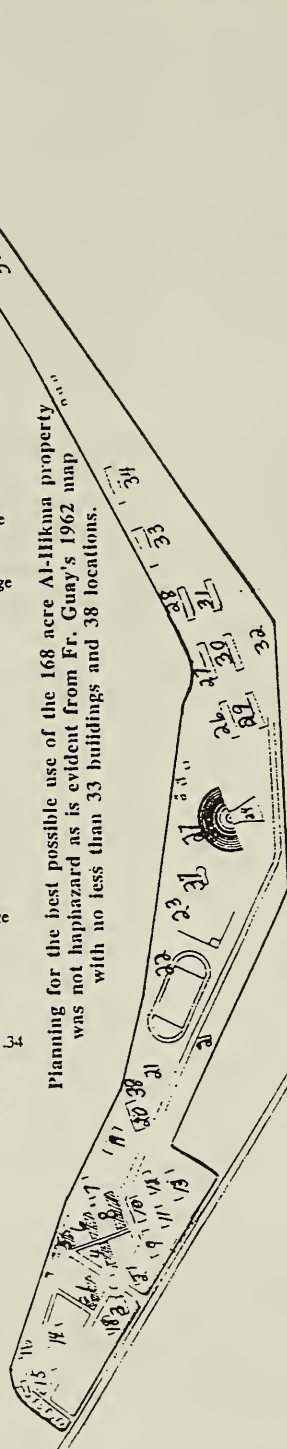
**Junior Year**

Engineering 41	3	Engineering 42	3
Engineering 51	4	Engineering 52	4
Mathematics 41	3	Mathematics 42	3
Metaph II Phil. 51		4 Metaph III Phil. 52	4
Physics 51	3	Engineering 54	3
Theology 41	2	Theology 42	2



1. Jesuit Faculty Residence
2. Administration Building
3. Chapel - Sodality Rooms
4. Library
5. Dining & Recreation Center
6. College of Business Adm.
7. College of Arts
8. Engineering College
9. College of Science
10. Electrical Engineering College
11. Mechanical Engineering
12. Electronic Computer Center
13. Petroleum Engineering College
14. Dormitories
15. Residences for Lay Professors
16. Residences for Workmen
17. Maintenance Shops
18. Arabic Institute
19. Swimming Pool
20. Athletic Building
21. Sports Areas
22. Football Field & Track
23. Baseball Diamond
24. Auditorium
25. Amphitheatre
26. College of Law
27. College of Sociology
28. Work Shops
29. Hydraulic Engineering College
30. College of Agriculture
31. Trade School
32. Hydraulic Field Projects
33. Shade Shelters for Seedlings
34. Solar Energy Institute
35. Field Projects for 29, 30, & 34
36. Pump House
37. Observatory & Planetarium
38. Antennas of Radio Telescope

Planning for the best possible use of the 168 acre Al-Hikma property was not haphazard as is evident from Fr. Guay's 1962 map with no less than 33 buildings and 38 locations.



See page 228

Other projects planned by the Jesuits at Al-Hikma  
The Jesuits had a strikingly optimistic attitude toward Al-Hikma. It is clear from the meticulous planning for its best use.

**See page 280 Other programs and adventures of alumni**

One of the later Al-Hikma graduates, Premjit Talwar recalls the impact one of the Al-Hikma faculty had on him.

In Germany last year I met Mr. Jochen Langer, my structures teacher, for the first time since graduating in 1968. He is still handsomely thin with the same shy smile and blond flock of hair falling over his face. We spent two wonderful days reminiscing over the Baghdadi days. I asked how he came to be a member of the Al-Hikma faculty and what his experience was like. He told me that he came across an advertisement announcing the need for someone to teach in Baghdad. He applied and was subsequently interviewed by Fr. Ryan in Germany. The interview was very short, as if the decision to hire him was already made on condition that he went to London for six months to improve his English.

He was one of my favorite instructors, regarded him as one of the most challenging teachers despite his youth. But nothing will exemplify his dedication to education as this episode. In 1968, during one of those turbulent days, a number of hooligans entered his classroom while he was lecturing and announced to the students that classes were canceled and exhorted the students to get out and join them in a demonstration. Mr. Langer asked these trouble makers to leave but they refused. He turned to the students giving them his permission to leave if they wanted to. To the amazement of the intruders none left. He then calmly resumed his lecture. Unbeknown to him, Fr. Ryan had already canceled the classes for the rest of the day.

His experience at Al-Hikma has influenced the direction of his career. While at Mannesmann, he has taken on projects in the Middle East. Even his son became enamored with the Middle East culture, eventually spending much time restoring an old Syrian monastery. (Premjit Talwar, AH '68)

Premjit Talwar had some insightful comment to make in reaction to a statement questioning the usefulness of the American Jesuit contribution to Iraqi education.

Education is an ever continuing process. Perhaps a different form of an organization is called for, but the usefulness of the Jesuits can never be underestimated for any generation. Here is why:

1. they bring a freshness that is foreign to many educational systems - call it a contrast between graduates of differing systems.



- b. instead of dogma, we get insight
- c. instead of memorization, we yearn for understanding
- d. instead of mimicking and copying, we seek creativity
- e. instead of orders we learn by example

2. The Jesuits became friends, not just teachers and administrators. For the first time, the Iraqis heard the word "love". With their love, the Jesuits could achieve more than the traditional disciplinary behavior of the Iraqi.

3. It is the unique character of Jesuits as Americans that helped make the above possible.

4. Also, I think it is these specific American Jesuits with their outgoing personalities that made the experience so special. Invariably, we could smile and laugh with Jesuits, without having to fear a paranoid backlash so typical of some Iraqi educators.

It should be mentioned here that other Iraqi schools also emphasized discipline. They did it with "fear", whereas the Jesuits did it with "care". Respect was not demanded by Jesuits but earned. Even in my Jewish Frank Ivy School which had a very high standard of discipline, obedience and respect were expected and received at the threat of punishment and humiliation - not so in my experience at Al-Hikma.

In Iraq there was a continual undeserved suspicion of these Jesuits because they were American. Even now, one Iraqi resident in the U.S. (not a graduate of either Baghdad College or Al-Hikma University) said: "Do not be naive, do you really believe that Al-Hikma's location so close to Muaskar Al-Rashid [the army camp] a coincidence?" To which I replied - "Did you know that the land was donated to the Jesuits by the government of Iraq itself?" It is the nature of an Iraqi to be suspicious.

The Jesuits had an uncanny insight into the thinking and ways of acting of the Iraqi people in times of tension for Iraq. They took nothing for granted and ultimately maintained their "cool" in dealing with controversy. It is important to mention that the Jesuits did not voluntarily leave Iraq in 1968 and 1969 because this would be, very simply, contradictory to their mission. They kept focused on their objectives. A lesson to all of us. (Premjit Talwar, A.H. '68)





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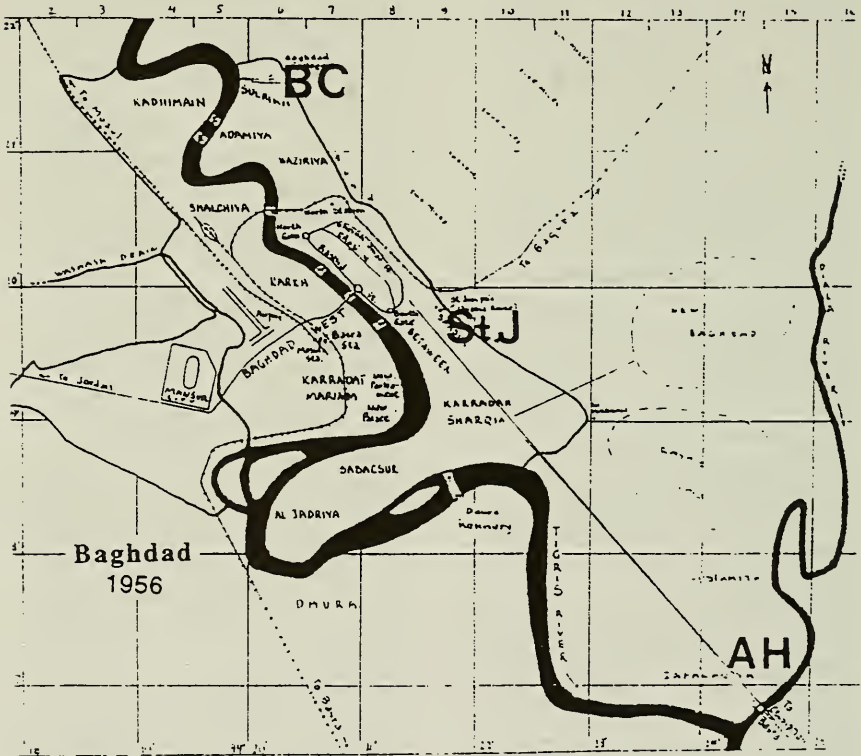


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Date palms are referred to as the "eternal plant: the most ancient tree in the world," having furnished man with fruit to eat and covering for his homes since the times of the Sumerians. 80% of the world's world's supply of dates are grown in Iraq. (Guide Book to Iraq: 1965)

A 1956 map of Baghdad showing the three Jesuit houses.





A remnant of the Baghdadi Jesuits ten years after their expulsion from Baghdad gathered together at the first biennial reunion which was held in Detroit, Michigan during July 1979. The photo was taken by Sabah Tomina.





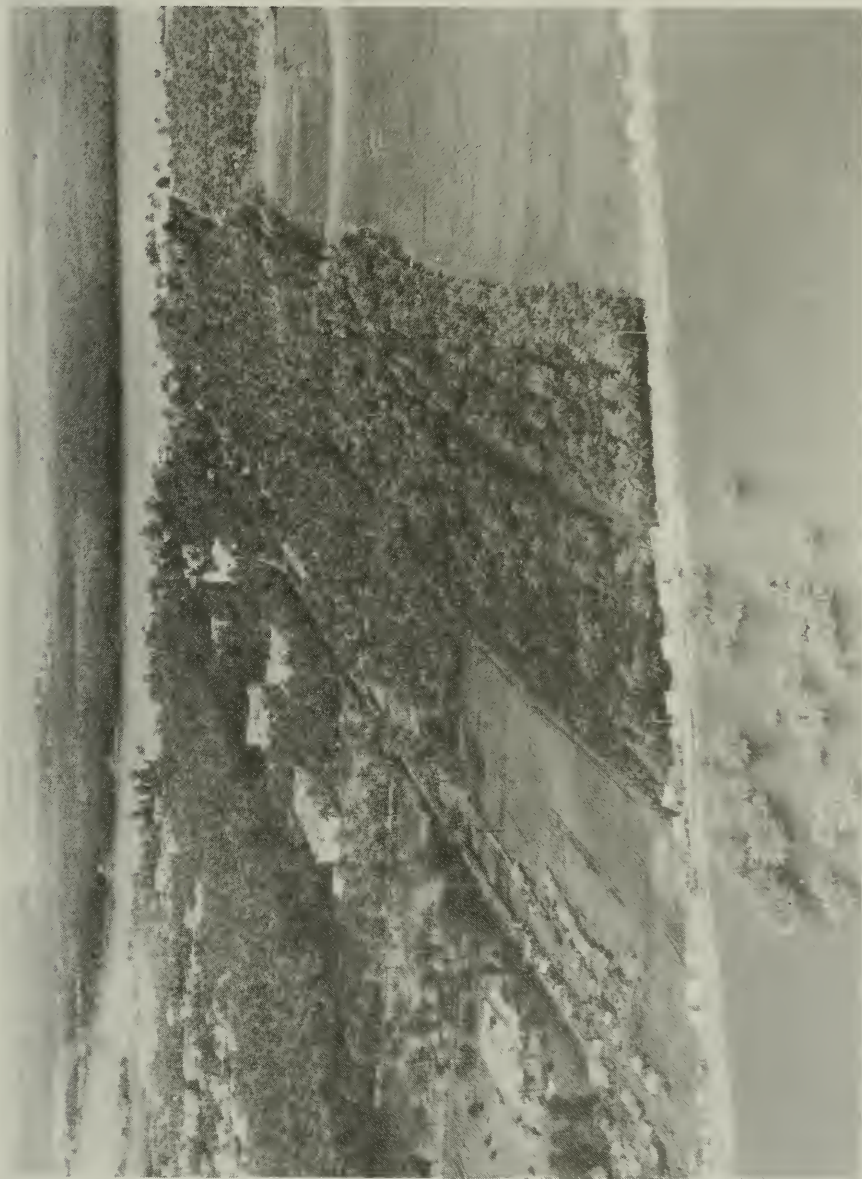
Activities at Baghdad College included watching the 1951 Fathers-Students thanksgiving day baseball game, trying to get past Fr. Kelly and onto the bus, waiting for the assembly to start, sleeping on the roof and playing basketball.







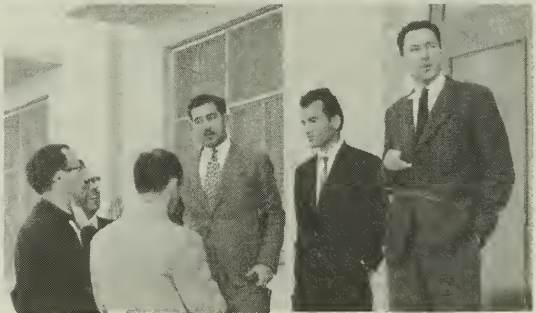
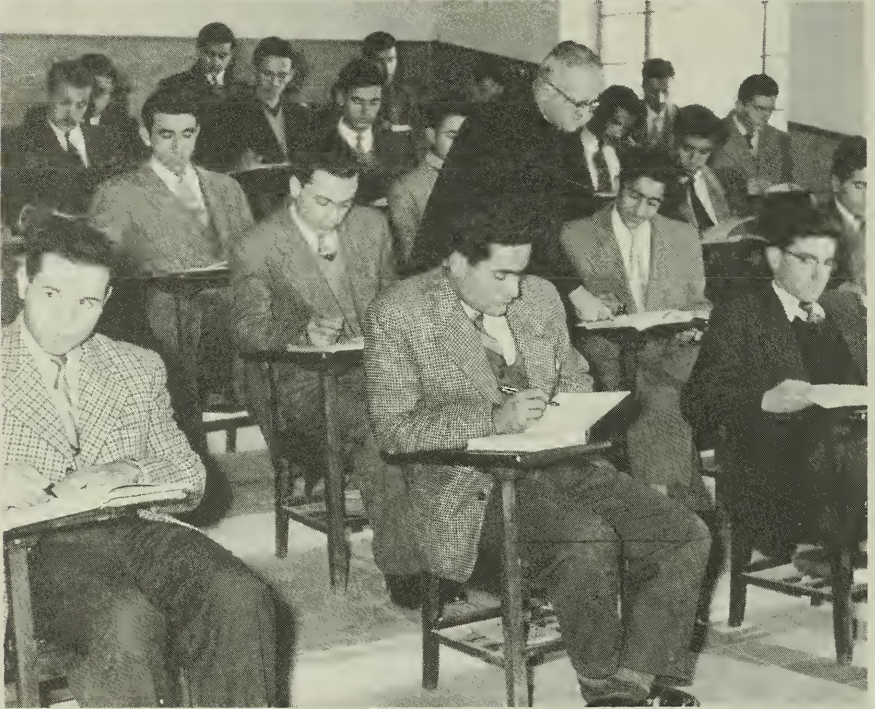
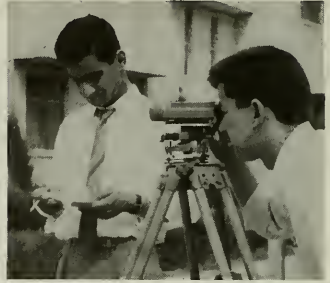
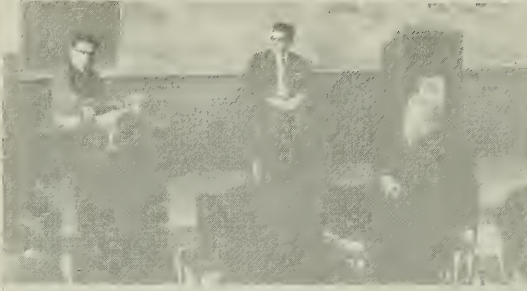
The 1954 spring brought a terrible flood to Baghdad and especially to Baghdad College. Water released north of the city flooded the desert area east of the sadda (dike) shown in the lower part of the picture, - the Tigris is seen in the upper part - thus surrounding B.C. The poor desert people brought their reed homes with them and moved onto the campus and along Baghdad College road.







Al-Hikma activities included seminars, surveying, taking final exams, playing backgammon and daily discussions.





Other Al-Hikma activities included mixing cement, testing its resistance and laying cornerstones for new buildings.







The four founders of Baghdad College who arrived in 1932



**Father William A. Rice**

*Born: Oct. 3, 1891*

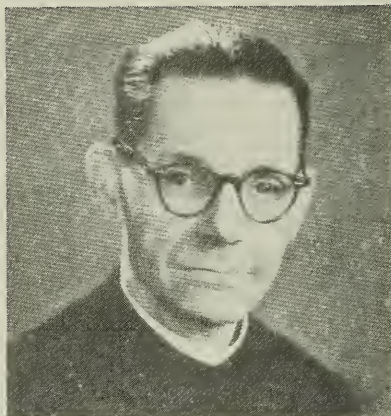
*Joined Jesuits: Aug. 14, 1911*

*Ordained Priest: Aug. 27, 1925*

*Arrived Baghdad: March 9, 1932*

*Years in Baghdad: 1932-1939*

*Died: Feb. 28, 1946*



**Father Edward F. Madaras**

*Born: Jan. 30, 1897*

*Joined Jesuits: Sept. 1, 1916*

*Ordained Priest: Aug. 27, 1929*

*Arrived in Baghdad: March 9, 1932*

*Years in Baghdad: 1932-46, 1946-67*

*Died: Oct. 2, 1967 (buried in Baghdad)*



**Father Edward J. Coffey**

*Born: Dec. 12, 1897*

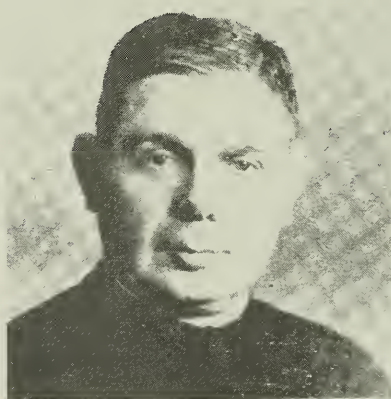
*Joined Jesuits: Aug. 14, 1916*

*Ordained Priest: Aug. 24, 1929*

*Arrived Baghdad: July 27, 1932*

*Years in Baghdad: 1932-1935*

*Died: July 25, 1986*



**Father John A. Mifsud  
(Miff)**

*Born: Dec. 7, 1895*

*Joined Jesuits: Oct. 29, 1916*

*Ordained Priest: July 29, 1929*

*Arrived in Baghdad: late August/  
early September, 1932*

*Years in Baghdad: 1932-46, 1948-64*

*Died: Dec. 7, 1977*

The author, Fr. MacDonnell spent eight years in Baghdad ('55-'58, '64-'69) teaching physics and mathematics at both Baghdad College and Al-Hikma. As physics teacher on Al-Hikma's pioneer faculty in 1956 he authored the first laboratory manuals and later on wrote several other books including *Jesuit Geometers*.



His degrees are from Boston College, Fordham and Colombia. He belongs to the Clavius Mathematical Research Group and is *Professor of Mathematics* at Fairfield University where he was voted *Teacher of Year* in 1986. He served as Trustee at Boston College for 14 years and as Consultor for the New England Province for 15 years.

Like many other Baghdadi Jesuits his interest in Baghdad was first stimulated by reading Fr. Madaras' periodical *Al Baghdadi* and then later enhanced by the persistent enthusiasm of alumni which is so evident in the biennial reunions organized by the B.J.A.A. The Baghdad Jesuit Alumni Association is energized by many alumni but especially through the generous efforts of Ramzi Hermiz, Dave Nona, Tahir Bazirgan and Waiel Hindo. The B.J.A.A. has many accomplishments, but Jesuits are especially proud of the genuine charity, intelligence and expertise their alumni displayed in getting massive amounts of food and medical supplies to desperate fellow Iraqis immediately after *Desert Storm*.









هذا الكتاب مهدى

الى شعب العراق النبيل المتعذب طويلا

الذي تحمل

حروبا لم يرغب فيها وحرمانا لم يتوقعه واحزاننا لم يستحقها

عسى الله

ان يخلصه من آلامه





# اليسوعيون على ضفاف دجلة

رجال في خدمة الآخرين  
في  
بغداد



تأليف:

الاب جوزيف ماكدونال اليسوعي

«جميع الحقوق محفوظة»



**The Northeast corner of the 168-acre Al-Hikma property granted to the Jesuits by the Iraqi government in 1955-56.**

# اليسوعيون على ضفاف دجلة

رجال  
في  
خدمة الآخرين  
في  
بغداد



تأليف:  
الاب جوزيف ماكدونال اليسوعي